

Postmodernism and the *Deus absconditus* in Lamentations 3

The book of Lamentations is often considered a prime example of the silence of God in the Hebrew Scriptures. A heartrending experience of the *Deus absconditus* seems to prevail in its poetry.

Lamentations 3, the third of five poems in the book, is probably in this respect the most controversial. It gives voice to the גִּבֹר, “who has seen affliction under the rod of his [God’s] wrath” (3,1). This voice joins others in Lamentations who decry the horrors of Jerusalem’s destruction. W. Lanahan’s seminal study identifies five distinct voices in the book: an objective reporter who approaches the devastated city (Lam 1,1-11b [except v. 9c]. 15.17; 2,1-19); Jerusalem, or Daughter Zion (1,11c-22; 2,20-22); the *bourgeois*, who give voice to the national communal outcry (Lam 4); the choral voice of the people of Jerusalem (Lam 5); in addition to the גִּבֹר in Lam 3, whom Lanahan identifies as a veteran, defeated soldier¹. Observing that “multiple poetic voices interweave, overlap, and contradict”, K. O’Connor narrows this to four: a narrator; Jerusalem (princess, lover, widow, daughter, and mother); a humiliated man; and the community².

Among all these “voices”, however, the Voice of God is apparently missing. “The book is God-abandoned”, O’Connor tersely puts it³. There seems to be in Lamentations a singular, experiential absence of God, the dreaded *Deus absconditus*. “Missing from the poetic voices in Lamentations is the voice of God. The missing voice looms over the book. The speakers refer to God, call for help, ask God to look, accuse God of hiding from

¹ W. LANAHAN, “The Speaking Voice in the Book of Lamentations”, *JBL* 93 (1974) 41-49.

² K. O’CONNOR “The Book of Lamentations”, *The New Interpreter’s Bible* (ed. L. KECK) (Nashville, TN 2001) VI, 1020.

³ K. O’CONNOR, *Lamentations & the Tears of the World* (Maryknoll, NY 2002) 15. Cf. also K. O’CONNOR, “Speak Tenderly to Jerusalem: Second Isaiah’s Reception and Use of Daughter Zion”, *Princeton Seminary Bulletin* 20 (1999) 287.

them, of attacking and forgetting them — but God never responds”⁴.

Yet, far from being hidden, the divine Name pervades Lamentations. In the five poems, Yhwh appears 30 times, with the greatest concentration (11 times), ironically, in the third poem⁵. In contrast, the more generic phoneme, אֵל, occurs only once, also in the third poem (3,41), while its plural form אֱלֹהִים is not found. Linguistically, then, Lamentations cannot be described as silent about God. The issue is however not literary. It is theological. God remains silent or refrains from action toward those who have suffered *in extremis* at the hands of the Babylonian invaders. The question is insistently posed near the end of the fifth poem: “Why have you forgotten us forever (לִנְסֶחַ)?” (5,20).

I. Imploring the Deity in Lamentations 3

The third poem (Lam 3,1-66) most insistently implores the deity. Often regarded as the theological core of Lamentations, this poem combines elements of the individual and communal lament. Structurally, this poem lies near the midpoint of the five poems, hence the claim it constitutes a chiasmic center for the entire book⁶. The dirges and laments in the first part of the book, according to this view, gradually ascend to a climax in Lam 3, where the חסד of YHWH becomes pivotal⁷. The third poem discloses the meaning of Jerusalem’s destruction. “The distress is a punishment,” observes B. Johnson, “but a punishment aimed at rehabilitation, not at definite rejection”⁸. The poems gradually descend into despair at

⁴ O’CONNOR, “Book of Lamentations”, 1021.

⁵ Lam 1,5.9.11-12.17-18.20; 2,6-8.17.20.22; 3,22.24-26.40.50.55.59.61.64.66; 4,11.16.20; 5,1.19.21.

⁶ B. JOHNSON, “Form and Message in Lamentations”, *ZAW* 97 (1985) 58-73; N. GOTTWALD, “The Book of Lamentations Reconsidered”, *The Hebrew Bible in Its Social World and in Ours* (SBLSS; Atlanta, GA 1993) 165-73; D. HILLERS, *Lamentations* (AB 7A; Garden City, NY 1972) xvi.

⁷ “[Lam 3] Als der Höhepunkt derselben heraushebt” — D. GIESEBRECHT, *Die Klagelieder Jeremia* (HKAT III/2/2; Göttingen 1907) xiv; J. KRAŠOVEC, “The Source of Hope in the Book of Lamentations”, *VT* 42 (1992) 223-233; D. A. HUBBARD, “Hope in the Old Testament”, *TynB* 34 (1983) 45.

⁸ JOHNSON, “Form and Message in Lamentations”, 73.

the end, with uncertainty regarding divine intervention at the conclusion⁹.

The pivotal position of this poem raises questions about its significance. Does it represent a climatic, wistful, although disappointed, yearning for God's mercy¹⁰? If merely wistful, forlorn longing, does it sardonically sustain the mood of the book? Is it a triumph of faith¹¹? If triumphal, does it break through to trust and hope, however fleetingly¹²?

Structured as a triple acrostic, each successive strophe of three cola begins with sequential Hebrew letters, making a total of 66 cola. Blending individual and communal lament¹³, it unfolds in a characteristic rising and falling, wave-like cadence. The \aleph strophe begins with the poet bitterly complaining about his plight.

[God] has driven and brought me into darkness without any light;
against me alone he turns his hand, again and again, all day long.
(3,2-3)

Despair and complaint pervade 3,1-18, or the \aleph - \daleth strophes. Then, in the \daleth strophe, the wave begins to rise (3,19-33), with anticipation of divine mercy and deliverance predominating. This continues through the \daleth strophe (3,33). Once more, the wave ebbs with the \daleth through the \daleth strophes (3,34-54). When the poet calls upon YHWH in the \daleth strophe (3,55-57), the poem rises once more toward hope (3,58-60).

You have taken up my cause, O LORD,
you have redeemed my life. (3,58)

⁹ W. KAISER JR., *A Biblical Approach to Personal Suffering* (Chicago, IL 1982) 24.

¹⁰ So O'CONNOR, "Book of Lamentations", 1051.

¹¹ So HUBBARD, "Hope in the Old Testament", 45.

¹² So J. GLADSON, *The Five Exotic Scrolls of the Hebrew Bible*. The Prominence, Literary Structure, and Liturgical Significance of the Megilloth (Lewiston, NY 2009) 197.

¹³ Lamentations 3,1-39 are in the style of an individual lament; vv. 40-47 shift to first person plural, then vv. 48-66 back to first person singular. Like most of the laments elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible, this one reflects (1) an accusation against God (3,1-18. 43-45); (2) complaint toward other people (an enemy) (3,46-48. 52-54. 61-66); (3) first-person (I or we) discourse. See P. MILLER, "Trouble and Woe: Interpreting the Biblical Laments", *Int* 37 (1983) 32-33.

Downward once more goes the poem, as the poet insists Yhwh bring retribution upon his tormentors in the ש through the ה strophes (3,61-66). With this, the poem comes to rest alphabetically and theologically, a “prolonged plea to God”¹⁴.

The third poem balances an acute awareness that the horrible calamity befallen the city has come from the “mouth of the Most High”, with the urgent need to submit penitently to divine mercy, the ultimate Source of hope¹⁵. This poem acknowledges the cause of suffering, interprets it as a pedagogical theodicy, and points hopefully to a future redemptive act. “The כֶּסֶד of YHWH never ceases” (3,22).

Although the poem follows a demanding acrostic structure, it contains several “voices”. The identity of these voices has so far resisted definitive clarification¹⁶. The I-voice in vv. 1-24 may be that of an anonymous masculine sufferer, the גֵּבֶר (3,1) a “shamed and humiliated captive”¹⁷, possibly even the poet of the poem. Earlier scholars frequently identified this voice with Jeremiah¹⁸, although this view has been largely abandoned. Hillers respects anonymity and identifies this voice as that of a “typical sufferer,” a person “who represents what any man may feel when it seems that God is against him”¹⁹. On the other hand, the “I” may be taken as a collective; thus the people or even Jerusalem speak(s)²⁰. The theology of hope in vv. 25-39 may well be attributed to the same voice, or to the poet, if the two are not identical. Carleen Mandolfo locates what she calls the Didactic Voice (DV) in Lam 3,22-24, a “normative voice” to “counter balance” that of 3,1-21 and also the first two poems of the book (Lam 1-2). This DV is centralized

¹⁴ F. DOBBS-ALLSOP, *Lamentations* (Louisville, KY 2002) 127.

¹⁵ Lam 3,21-23.25-30.33-36.38.40-42.

¹⁶ N. GOTTWALD, “Lamentations”, *Harper’s Bible Commentary* (ed. J. MAYS) (San Francisco, CA 1988) 650. Deciphering the voices in Lam 3 is but a part of the larger problem of the entire book. As noted above, there is no consensus on how many voices speak in Lamentations.

¹⁷ K. O’CONNOR, “Book of Lamentations”, 1020.

¹⁸ So P. VERMIGLI, “Commentary on the Lamentations of the Prophet Jeremiah”, *The Peter Martyr Library* (trans. D. SHUTTE) (Sixteenth Century Essays & Studies 55; Kirksville, MO 2002) VI, 146.

¹⁹ HILLERS, *Lamentations*, 64.

²⁰ “Here Jerusalem says of itself: ‘I am this sufferer’” — O. EISSFELDT, *The Old Testament. An Introduction* (New York 1965) 503 (italics Eissfeldt).

ideologically by an intrusion of “divine discourse into what is otherwise theologically troubling human speech”²¹. Furthermore, the “I” voice vv. 48-66 may be the same as the voice at the beginning of the poem. This leaves the “we” voice in vv. 40-47, which is no doubt collective, and thus probably the voice of the community. If the “I” voice is to be understood as collective, however, then the “we” and the “I” voices in the poem are in a sense identical.

This somewhat confusing array of anonymous voices no doubt represents the communal struggle on individual and communal levels with doubt, faith, and meaning in the aftermath of Jerusalem’s destruction.

II. YHWH’s Voice in Lamentations 3?

Even if one finds problematic these vocal identifications in Lam 3, Lam 3,19-33 is certainly an appeal to the traditional theology of Israel that divine love (mercy) will eventually triumph over divine wrath (justice)²². Often overshadowed, Lam 3,55-57 represents the other accent of hope in this poem. It is in this κ strophe, if anywhere in Lamentations, that the divine Voice may be found.

קראתי שמך יהוה מבור תחתיות
קולי שמעת אל־תעלם אונך לרוחתי לשועתי
קרבת ביום אקראך אמרת אל־תירא

I called upon your name, O YHWH, from the lowest pit;
My call you heard, “Do not cover your ear to my outcry²³, to my cry”!
You approached on a day when I called on you; you said, “Do not fear”!

Here, rather than in anticipation as in 3,19-33, the poet refers to deliverance from a בור, “pit”, “well” (3,53.55). Is this a previous deliverance, or deliverance from the metaphorical present “pit” of Jerusalem’s destruction and exile? Is this voice speaking of some

²¹ MANDOLFO, *Daughter Zion Talks Back to the Prophets*. A Dialogic Theology of the Book of Lamentations (Atlanta, GA 2007) 72.

²² Cf. the cultic credo in Exod 34,6-7. “Mercy triumphs over judgment” (Jas 2,13).

²³ רִוְחָה “respite”, is awkward here. Something like “outcry” seems demanded, which is followed here.

past experience as a precedent for hope, or deliverance contemporaneous with the present?

The פ strophe continues a sequence begun in v. 52, where tormentors are said to have flung the poet into a בֹּר (v. 53), here no doubt a euphemism for the place or sphere of the dead²⁴. Water surges over his head²⁵. He cries, “I am cut off” (v. 54). In the פ strophe, which picks up the metaphor of בֹּר , the poet cries out to YHWH and finally hears, “Do not fear!” (vv. 55-57). The next strophe, and perhaps the following three (vv. 58-66), appear to respond. “You have taken up my cause, O Lord, / you have redeemed my life” (v. 58). Some type of deliverance is recalled. Whether in the past or in the present remains the question.

Given that verbal action in the Semitic languages in general, and Hebrew in particular, signal only a “general temporal orientation” and not a true tense or temporal aspect²⁶, the syntax of the פ strophe offers little help in resolving this question. Let us consider the following alternative renditions to discover whether some light can be shed upon this temporal issue.

If the controlling verbs in vv. 55-57, קרא , שמע , קרב , and אמר , respectively, be taken as perfectives of complete-action, designating an action now complete²⁷, and reading the two imperfectives (העלם [v. 56], אקרא [v. 57]) in accord with their controlling perfectives, the following rendition results:

²⁴ Thus, if this is a metaphor for the destruction and exile of Jerusalem, it symbolizes a kind of death. Cf. W. REYBURN, *A Handbook on Lamentations* (United Bible Society Handbook Series; New York 1992) 100. Cf. Ps 88,6. Reyburn proposes a dynamic rendering as “From the deepest hole, Lord, I called out to you for help”, or “From the bottom of the pit I cried out, ‘Lord, help me’”. Cf. also H.-J. KRAUS, *Klagelieder (Threni)* (BKAT 22; Neukirchen 1956) 62.

²⁵ This expression may be metaphorical for overwhelming trouble or evil. See Pss 18,4-5 (Heb: 5-6); 69,1-2.15 (Heb: 2-3.16); 124,4. Psalm 69,15[16] refers to this under the same image as Lamentations: a בֹּר .

²⁶ P. KORCHIN, *Markedness in Canaanite and Hebrew Verbs* (HSS 58; Winona Lake, IN 2008) 77. A Hebrew verb in the perfective form may express perfective, progressive or even future aspect, cf. B. WALTKE – M. O’CONNOR, *An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax* (Winona Lake, IN 1990) § 20.2c.

²⁷ R. WILLIAMS, *Williams’ Hebrew Syntax* (Toronto ³2007) § 162.

I *called* on your name, O YHWH, from the lowest pit.
 My voice you *heard*. You did not cover your ear to my outcry, to my cry.
 You *approached* on a day when I called you. You *said*, "Do not fear".

The reference is to a past episode, now recalled for support of a faltering faith²⁸.

If the controlling verbs are taken as perfects of certitude, the so-called prophetic perfect²⁹, the aspect is consistent with 3,19-30, which looks for an imminent (?) divine deliverance. In this case, the poet asserts his intention in the face of despair. The aspect now is future, albeit a future regarded as virtually certain³⁰.

I *will call* on your name, O YHWH, from the lowest pit.
 My voice you *will hear*. You *will not cover* your ear to my outcry, to my cry.
 You *will approach* on a day when I call you. You *will say*, "Do not fear".

Still another way these difficult cola might be understood, with Hillers and Lemke³¹, is to take the entire sequence of action as *imperative* or *precative* in mood:

I *call* your name, O YHWH, out of the lowest pit.
Hear my voice! Do not cover your ear to my outcry, to my cry.
Approach on a day when I call you. *Say*, "Do not fear".

²⁸ So I. PROVAN, *Lamentations* (New Century Bible; Grand Rapids, MI 1991) 81-82. Most modern commentators accept that a past event is in view here. See: N. GOTTWALD, *Studies in the Book of Lamentations* (SBT 14; London, 1954) 14; T. MEEK, "The Book of Lamentations," *The Interpreter's Bible* (Nashville 1956) VI, 28; H. WIESMANN, *Die Klagelieder*. Übersetzt und erklärt (Frankfurt 1954) 194, 196.

²⁹ R. WILLIAMS, *Williams' Hebrew Syntax*, § 165. GKC identifies these as the *perfectum propheticum*, describing an "imminent" event as "already accomplished" (§ 106.1n); since the speaker resolves to do something in the future, B. WALTKE – M. O'CONNOR (*Hebrew Syntax*, § 30.4b) identify this as a *perfective of resolve*.

³⁰ This line uses a prolepsis in which the poet "anticipates coming events as if they have already occurred" — H. HARVEY JR., "Lamentations", *The Interpreter's One-Volume Commentary on the Bible* (ed. C.M. LAYMON) (Nashville, TN 1971) 408.

³¹ D. HILLERS, *Lamentations* [1972], 52; W. LEMKE, "Lamentations", *The HarperCollins Study Bible: New Revised Standard Version* (ed. W. MEEKS; New York, NY 1993) 1217. Cf. also I. PROVAN, *Lamentations*, 83; F. DOBBS-ALLSOP, *Lamentations*, 126.

If the sequence of verbs alternating between perfects and imperatives in 3,55-66 be taken in this manner, the movement toward hope becomes dramatically evident. It concludes with an imperative for YHWH to bring judgment upon the poet's enemies, a specific form of deliverance, as in many lament Psalms.

The entire poem may thus be read as one of falling and rising, then falling and rising once more to hope. It is thus not entirely a poem of despair. Like many laments in the Psalms, it alternates between despair and hope. The poet awaits a divine intervention still eluding his grasp.

It is possible to read the verbal aspects in 3,55-57 in yet another manner, as experience (or fientive) perfectives³².

I *call* on your name, O YHWH, from the lowest pit.
My voice you *hear*. You do not cover your ear to my outcry, to my cry.
You *approach* on a day when I call you. You *say*, "Do not fear".

Understood in this way, the action in 3,55-57 would be in process, occurring at the moment or in the immediate present. Such progressive action is often found with *verba dicendi*, "verbs of speaking"³³. The poet is now speaking of deliverance somehow taking place in the present³⁴. The פ strophe thus would be regarded as an experiencing of the divine relief the poet has so anxiously awaited in the previous strophes. This strophe heightens intensity up until the final divine word. "I call on your name, O YHWH" (v. 55), which is triply emphasized by "my cry you hear, you do not hide your ear" (v. 56), and "you approach in the day I call you" (v. 57). The אֶל־הוֹרֵא (v. 57) may be representative of a climatic divine breaking of silence.

³² An *experience perfective* is fientive, often used with imprecations, and expresses a state of mind. This latter category would apply especially to קָרַבְתָּ , "you approach," and אָמַרְתָּ , "you say" in 3,57. See R. WILLIAMS, *Williams' Hebrew Syntax*, § 162, 163; GKC § 106abⁱ.

³³ B. WALTKE – M. O'CONNOR, *Hebrew Syntax*, § 30.5.1d.

³⁴ Comparative evidence from the Psalms (e.g., 17,6; 88,10; 119,145-47; 130,1; 141,1) suggests the perfectives in vv. 55-57. be understood as present action, "I cry", etc. Appeals to YHWH in such poems must sometimes be translated as present tenses. Cf. B. ALBREKTSON, *Studies in the Text and Theology of the Book of Lamentations with a Critical Edition of the Peshitta Text* (Studia Theologica Lundensia 21; Lund 1963) 163.

“Do not fear” is a “formula of revelation” in the HB, often used as the introductory word in a priestly oracle³⁵. Preceded by אַמֵּר, the expression, “fear not,” must be taken as direct speech³⁶. In this respect, Ps 55 is similar, following a wave-like pattern, alternating between despair (vv. 1-15.20-21) and hope (vv. 16-19.22-23). Hope emerges in this psalm when the poet apparently receives a priestly or prophetic oracle, and responds by urging listeners to cast their burdens upon YHWH (v. 22). The acrostic poet of Lamentations may follow this same conventional form in expressing a contemporaneous assurance of YHWH’s deliverance. Were this strophe in one of the lament psalms, it would no doubt be regarded as the complainant’s acknowledgment of a reassuring word of a (cultic) prophet or priest, who spoke in behalf of YHWH³⁷.

In the familiar “Lamentation over the Destruction of Sumer and Ur”, an ancient Near Eastern city-lament often compared to Lamentations, the god Enlil “speaks a friendly word”, so that “at the word spoken by An (and) Enlil, it (Ur) is delivered”³⁸. Dobbs-Allsop contrasts Enlil’s word with the astonishing divine silence in Lamentations³⁹. Is it not plausible that the word, “fear not” in Lam 3,57 functions similarly to the “friendly word” of Enlil, and thus

³⁵ J. BEGRICH, “Das priesterliche Heilsorakel,” *ZAW* 52 (1934) 81-92.

³⁶ So most modern translations. Cf. REYBURN, *Handbook on Lamentations*, 101.

³⁷ Cf. S. MOWINCKEL, *The Psalms in Israel’s Worship* (Nashville, TN 1962) II, 57-58. “Yahweh speaks in the sanctuary ... Those who transmit his word (cultic prophets? Priests?) seek to hear what he says” — H.-J. KRAUS, *Theology of the Psalms* (Minneapolis, MN 1992) 33; Cf. H.-J. KRAUS, *Klagelieder*, 62. Lam 3,58-60 is the certification of the response to the complainant’s prayer. Sirach’s prayer also provides a parallel. In telling of his past deliverances, he mentions calling upon God, and “my prayer was heard” (Sir 51,1-12). The “do not fear” of YHWH, according to H. GUTHRIE JR., *Interpreter’s One-Volume Commentary*, 408, “may be a direct quotation of what was said in the oracle of reassurance that followed a lament in the sanctuary”. L. SABOURIN, *The Psalms. Their Origin and Meaning* (New York 1974) 46, points to several psalmic passages that imply some kind of oracle was made known to a worshiper that his/her prayer was heard (Pss 3,3-4; 6,9-10; 22,25; 28,6; 34,7; 66,16-20). It is possible that a cultic prophet or priest pronounced this oracle.

³⁸ Li. 467, 479-480 (*ANET*, 619, trans. S. KRAMER).

³⁹ F. DOBBS-ALLSOP, *Lamentations*, 150.

intends to break the divine silence and bring hope to the beleaguered poets of Lamentations?

In most cases in the HB where the expression, אֶל־תִּירָא, is found, it has a contemporaneous reference⁴⁰. Here, its only occurrence in Lamentations, it is unfortunately impossible to tell with any degree of certainty whether it references past, present, or future. Given the context of the poem, despite the considerations noted above, more likely it refers to some previous experience attributed to God, answered by an assuring oracle⁴¹. The temporal clause, “in the day when I called on you”, בַּיּוֹם אֶקְרָאךָ, (3,57), suggests a past experience.

Even though probably recalling an earlier incident, the poet intends its recital, not as satirical, but as an expression of what he believes YHWH has done, is doing, or will do for the struggling Judahites. He intends this recital to crack open the door for YHWH's current or future intervention. It stands as a metaphor for the anticipated divine action. Thus he cites a word of YHWH: “Do not fear”! To the other voicings in Lamentations, in other words, the poet now adds the Voice of God. The silence of God is broken, whether in present reality or anticipation, in this plea for deliverance⁴². In this imperative, the *Deus absconditus* now becomes the *Deus revelatus*.

Interestingly, Lamentations shares this reticence to give voice to YHWH with the other *Khamesh Megilloth* of which it is a part. While in part this may be due to prevailing, post-exilic *Zeitgeist* in which these books reached their final form, when there was in Second Temple Judaism an ever-increasing reluctance to speak

⁴⁰ See Gen 15,1. 24; 46,3; Num 21,34; Deut 1,21; Josh 8,1; 10,8; 11,6; Judg 4,18; 6,23; 1 Sam 22,23; 23,17; 2 Sam 9,7; 2 Kgs 1,15; 6,16; 19,6; 1 Chr 22,13; 28,30; Isa 7,4; 10,24; 41,10.13; 43,1.5; 44,2; Jer 1,8; 30,10; 46,27-28; Ezek 2,6; Dan 10,12.19. Three occurrences are of uncertain temporal reference: Job 5,22; Ps 49,16; Prov 3,25. This expression appears 40 times in the HB, but significantly only here in Lamentations.

⁴¹ So MARTYR, *Lamentations*, 147. Determination of the temporal aspect here is of little consequence, according to O'CONNOR, “Book of Lamentations”, 1056, and what matters is that “it functions in the poem as a cause for present expectancy, a budding hope that God has already begun to act”. Cf. Ps 31,21-22.

⁴² Cf. “He fulfills the desire of all who fear him, / he also hears their cry, and saves them” (Ps 145,18).

directly of God, especially of the divine name YHWH, it eerily anticipates our postmodern era⁴³.

III. Postmodernism and the Silence of God

Postmodernism frustratingly resists clear definition⁴⁴. Definitions are problematic because postmodernism accepts no definite terms, absolute truths, or boundaries. Generally, postmodernism refers to a style of thought suspicious of any attempt through rationalist means to account for objectivity or truth. While not rejecting entirely the notion of metanarratives, it rejects specific metanarratives, replacing them with others such as narratives of rejection or disempowerment⁴⁵. Reality and even persons are considered “diverse, dispersed, indeterminate, and ungrounded”. Its approach to thought and life is “playful, eclectic, pluralistic, and subversive of traditional boundaries”⁴⁶. Postmodernism, then, may be taken as referring to this broad mindset, while postmodernity refers instead to the present historical era in which this style of thinking seems philosophically and culturally to prevail.

Postmodernism is also indeterminate, diverse, and ungrounded with respect to notions of deity, and it is in this sense it parallels the mood in Lamentations. God (or gods), representing the central character(s) in a metanarrative, is held in suspicion. Although he wrote before postmodernity, Tillich describes the human dilemma vis-à-vis the divine in very postmodernistic terms, as “one of not having, not seeing, not knowing, and not grasping” the divine. God is not found within a doctrine, an institution, or even within the

⁴³ The Targum to Lamentations illustrates this point. Instead of a direct mention of God in Lam 3,57, the Targum has the Angel of God draw near, and God’s Word מִיָּמִן speak, “You said by your *Memra*, ‘Do not fear’”. Cf. E. LEVINE, *The Aramaic Version of Lamentations* (New York 1976) 157.

⁴⁴ P. ROSENAU, *Post-Modernism and the Social Sciences* (Princeton, NJ 1992) 17, complains “the term postmodern is employed so broadly that it seems to apply to everything and nothing all at once”.

⁴⁵ L. BOEVE, *Interrupting Tradition. An Essay on Christian Faith in a Postmodern Context* (Louvain Theological and Pastoral Monographs; Leuven 2002) 67.

⁴⁶ R. & R. K. SOULEN, *Handbook of Biblical Criticism* (Louisville, KY 2001) 140.

Bible. God is “God for us just in so far as we do not possess him”. He alludes to expectancy such as appears in Lam 3, an anxious “waiting” for God that pervades Scripture⁴⁷. In this sense, Tillich’s paradoxical description of the theologian echoes the uncertainty in Lamentations. “Every theologian is committed and alienated”, he writes. “He is always in faith and in doubt; he is inside and outside the theological circle. Sometimes the one side prevails, sometimes the other; and he is never certain which side really prevails”⁴⁸.

A parallel to postmodern indeterminacy and uncertainty and Lamentations 3,55-57 may be found in the work of William Desmond⁴⁹. Desmond wrestles with what he calls the postmodern “allergy to transcendence”, which strips the world of “signs and traces of the divine”, and absolutizes human autonomy. Consequently, a modern silence about God has emerged, born not of reverence or awe but of hostility and irritation. This bends downward, Desmond claims, toward an ultimate, unbearable nihilism, yet at the same time reopens us to the “porosity of being”.

How can one speak of God in such a climate? Desmond’s response is that we must speak of God metaxologically, that is “from the middle”, from within human experience. From this intermediate location we cannot see the beginning, end, depth, or heights of Being, and so have no direct access to God. Humanity stands in an ambiguous or equivocal position with respect to the divine. To speak of God therefore requires using images and representations that require equivocity or an inevitable doubleness. Naming and imaging God is necessary (otherwise the word “God” has no content) and impossible in the sense that all images univocally fall short. We may speak of God only indirectly, cautiously, with reticence, particularly with reference to making claims about God. Indirect speech about God is metaphorical, a μεταφέρειν, a “carrying between”, carrying across a gap, speaking of the beyond from the midst of finitude. Metaphorical speech often

⁴⁷ P. TILlich, *Shaking the Foundations* (New York 1948) 150-151.

⁴⁸ P. TILlich, *Systematic Theology* (Chicago, IL 1951-1965) I, 10.

⁴⁹ For what follows, I draw from the analysis of William Desmond’s thought in C. SIMPSON, *Religion, Metaphysics, and the Postmodern*. William Desmond and John D. Caputo (Indiana Series in the Philosophy of Religion; Bloomington, IN 2009) 91-97. Simpson gathers from Desmond’s writings a convenient consensus of his philosophical analysis.

involves certain phenomena that carry us to the thought of the transcendent⁵⁰. We are “thrown” beyond ourselves (Heidegger), beyond hyperbole to the transcendent. Something in our experience (immanence) suggests something beyond our experience (transcendence), something “asymmetrical” to finitude in the middle of finitude. These excessive happenings become signs that point beyond us to ultimacy.

While *Lamentations* is certainly not postmodern in the broadest sense, something like Desmond’s ideation is going on when the poet of the third poem dares break the silence of God in the book. Why the book seems so reticent to “voice” the divine is a mystery. Perhaps this reticence is rooted in the poet’s fear of the divine, particularly since the distress of Jerusalem is attributed to YHWH’s excessive anger (2,20-22). Perhaps this same Kierkegaardian “fear and trembling” of the Numinous furthermore inclined the poet to avoid too familiar mention of the divine, in keeping with other post-exilic Jewish literature. Nevertheless, the poet in 3,57 interrupts the interplay of silence / presence by offering a divine word in direct speech, however elusive or metaphorical this speech may be.

In sum, *Lamentations* is often thought to reflect the silence of God. Although the five poems making up the book mention YHWH numerous times, God seemingly does not act or speak within the poetry. Contextual, literary, grammatical, and form critical analysis of Lam 3,55-57, the *crux interpretum* for the silence of God in the book, compel consideration that the ρ strophe from the long, triple acrostic third poem may intend to break this oppressive silence, representing the divine Voice as saying, “Do not fear”. The strophe may reflect, in other words, the poet’s past or present experience after the fall of the city, an awareness of the Divine Presence who in absence speaks a word of assurance. For these poets in *Lamentations*, God still stands in the background of the whole of life, emerging only fleetingly and even then in ways oblique. To the skeptical, this detachment may be interpreted as the absence, or even non-existence of God; to the person of faith, as the

⁵⁰ The term “transcendent” is ambiguous. Does it mean spatial, temporal, axiological, or ontological transcendence? In Desmond’s thought, it seems to denote an axiological or ontological transcendence. Cf. W. POWER, “Notion of Transcendence and the Problem of Discourse about God”, *JAAR* 43 (1975) 535-538).

“hiddenness” of God, or even as *Deus absconditus*. In this respect, it is similar to the ambiguous, indeterminate, partial approach to reality characterized by postmodernism. If the reading proposed here is accepted, God in the book of Lamentations cannot be regarded as completely silent. The divine Voice, however fleeting, joins the other voices in Lamentations in this poignant, moving dirge over a fallen, despairing city.

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SUMMARY

Lamentations reflects the silence of God. God seemingly does not act or speak. To some, this detachment represents an absence of God; to others, a “hiddenness” of God (*Deus absconditus*). Analysis of Lam 3,55-57, the crux interpretum for the divine silence, suggests the ρ strophe may break this oppressive silence. The strophe reflects an awareness of God who speaks. God stands in the background of the whole of life for this poet, emerging only fleetingly and in ways oblique. This perspective is similar to the ambiguous, indeterminate approach to reality in postmodernism. The divine Voice thus joins other voices in Lamentations.

Rescued Already? The Significance of עֲנִיתִי in Psalm 22,22

At the end of the Masoretic Text (MT) of Psalm 22,22 the word עֲנִיתִי is found. Many commentators have understood this word as a verbal declaration of an answer received or perceived during the recitation of the Psalm, implying a transition from the preceding lament to the succeeding praise of almost shocking rapidity. Others have argued for interpretations that blend this word more closely into the lament, delaying and softening the transition to praise, and arguably shifting the focus from present praise to commitment to future praise. In this article the textual validity of עֲנִיתִי and its possible functions in the text will be considered.

Apart from עֲנִיתִי the interpretation of Ps 22,22 is generally straightforward. The first part of the verse is a plea: “Save me from the mouth of the lion”. This is followed by וּמִקְרָנֵי רִמִּים, a phrase commonly rendered as: “and from the horns of the wild oxen”. Regarding עֲנִיתִי two key issues present themselves. Firstly there is the question of whether the reading of the MT is reliable. A number of commentators and translators have favoured an emendation based primarily on retroversion from the Septuagint, which has τὴν ταπεινῶσίν in the position corresponding to עֲנִיתִי¹. Secondly questions arise concerning the semantic range of the *qatal* form of the verb used in the MT. In particular, these questions concern time reference and modality.

Concerning the textual question it should be emphasised that there is no intrinsic reason why the MT should be given a

¹ See for example: C.A. BRIGGS – E.G. BRIGGS, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Psalms* (ICC; Edinburgh 1907) I, 197; H. GUNKEL, *Die Psalmen* (Göttingen 1968) 89; S.L. TERRIEN, *The Psalms. Strophic Structure and Theological Commentary* (ECC; Grand Rapids, MI 2003) 233; F.G. VILLANUEVA, *The Uncertainty of a Hearing. A Study of the Sudden Change of Mood in the Psalms of Lament* (VTS 121; Leiden 2008) 88. Translations based on the Septuagint reading are found in the Revised Standard Version, the New Jerusalem Bible, the French Bible de Jérusalem, and in German, the Einheitsübersetzung. Note also the Vulgate: “humilitatem meam”.

privileged status over against readings derived from the Versions. As Tov puts it, “In principle, *the evaluation of Hebrew and retroverted variants is identical, as long as the retroversion is reliable* [italics original]”². In practice the evaluation of Hebrew and retroverted variants is indeed different, but this is not due to any inherent weakness in the Versions themselves, but results from the uncertainty involved in the process of reconstructing the underlying Hebrew texts. Evaluating the trustworthiness of proposed retroversions is therefore necessary.

I. The Septuagint reading

The Septuagint reading is typically interpreted along the following lines: “Save me from the mouth of the lion, and my afflicted soul from the horns of the wild oxen”. This assumes retroversion from τῇ ταπείνωσίν μου to a Hebrew original of עָנִי or עָנִיתִי, derived from the homonym of the root עָנָה glossed in BDB as “be bowed down, afflicted”³. In favour of עָנִיתִי is that it differs by only one consonant from the MT. However this set of consonants does not occur as a noun in BHS. It does occur on four occasions as a verb: in Ps 35,13 (piel), 116,10 (qal), and 119,71 (pual), it is found as a first person *qatal* form rendered in the Septuagint by appropriate variants of ταπείνώω. The fourth occurrence (Hos 14,9) is also rendered in the Septuagint as a verbal form from ταπείνώω, although most English translations derive this Hebrew verb from the homonym meaning “answer”⁴. Given the consonants עָנִיתִי in the Hebrew *Vorlage* of the Septuagint, it is not clear (unless traditional oral vocalisation demanded it) why literally inclined Septuagint translators would have opted for an otherwise unattested nominal form when the

² E. TOV, *The Text-Critical Use of the Septuagint in Biblical Research* (Jerusalem 1997) 213-214. This is not universally accepted. Compare (for example) D.F. PAYNE, “Old Testament Textual Criticism: Its Principles and Practice”, *TynB* 25 (1974) 108.

³ BRIGGS – BRIGGS, *Psalms* I, 205; J. LUST et al., *A Greek-English Lexicon of the Septuagint* (Stuttgart 1992) 605; VILLANUEVA, *Uncertainty*, 81.

⁴ See for example English Standard Version, New American Standard Bible, New English Translation, New International Version, New Jerusalem Bible.

verbal form found elsewhere could make quite acceptable sense (for example, taking it as a qal form: “From the horns of the wild oxen I am afflicted”)⁵. Every other occurrence of the phrase τὴν ταπείνωσίν μου in the Septuagint corresponds to עֲנִי in the MT⁶. Whilst mechanical retroversion using such evidence is not foolproof⁷, the existence of a different yet contextually acceptable meaning for the consonants עֲנִי is a point in favour of the shorter form. Regrettably the biblical manuscripts from the Judean desert provide no evidence beyond v. 21 of Ps 22⁸, but in the absence of such external evidence, עֲנִי is the preferable retroversion, despite the greater difference from the MT.

In favour of these retroverted readings over against the MT is the use by Symmachus of τὴν κάκωσίν μου in place of τὴν ταπείνωσίν μου. Symmachus produced what is widely agreed to be a sound translation of the Hebrew⁹, so his use of a different (but related) nominal translation implies that he did have access to a text containing עֲנִי or something similar. This suggests that the translation found in the Septuagint was not the product of a reading error on the part of the Septuagint translator (or indeed the product of idiosyncratic exegesis), but that an actual written Hebrew text did exist with a nominal form¹⁰. On the other hand Symmachus seems to have had considerable respect for the Septuagint, so his translation of Ps 22 could equally reflect a refinement of the pre-existing Greek text which he favoured over against his own Hebrew manuscript¹¹. Aquila’s version, however, reflects the reading found in the MT, rendering עֲנִיָּה using an aorist verb: εἰσήκουσας με¹². This is significant given the notably

⁵ Regarding literal translation tendencies in the Psalms of the Septuagint see VILLANUEVA, *Uncertainty*, 87.

⁶ See: Gen 31,42; Ps 9,14; 25,18; 31,8; 119,153, and Lam 1,9.

⁷ Tov, *The Text-Critical Use of the Septuagint*, 67.

⁸ 4QPs^f includes Ps 22,14-17, and 5/6HevPs includes vv. 4-9 and vv. 15-21. Cf. E. ULRICH, *The Biblical Qumran Scrolls*. Transcriptions and Textual Variants (VTS 134; Leiden 2010) 793.

⁹ K.H. JOBES – M.SILVA, *Invitation to the Septuagint* (Carlisle 2000) 40.

¹⁰ Cf. Tov, *The Text-Critical Use of the Septuagint*, 88.

¹¹ Tov, *The Text-Critical Use of the Septuagint*, 151, notes that Symmachus did apparently exercise some freedom in translating his *Vorlage*.

¹² F. FIELD, *Origenis Hexaplorum quae supersunt sive veterum interpretum graecorum in totum Vetus Testamentum fragmenta* (Oxford 1875) II, 119.

literal approach to translation of the Hebrew text followed by Aquila¹³, as it demonstrates the existence of Hebrew manuscripts in the 2nd century C.E. which corresponded to the Masoretic reading of Ps 22,22 of a few centuries later.

In support of the Septuagint reading is the way in which it parallels the preceding verse¹⁴. This might be paraphrased as:

- v. 21 Deliver from the sword my soul;
from the claw of the dog my precious life.
- v. 22 Save me from the mouth of the lion;
from the horns of the wild oxen my afflicted soul.

This translation is appealing; in particular, as Briggs points out, it may fit better with the reference to the wild oxen than does the reading of the MT¹⁵. However the use of forms derived from עני to mean “afflicted soul” is unusual¹⁶. The nominal form עני is predominantly used in reference to “my affliction” in the Hebrew bible¹⁷; metonymic use referring to the state of the speaker’s soul or flesh cannot be excluded, but lacks precedent.

Retroversion from the Septuagint does give a shorter reading here¹⁸. However the legitimacy of appealing to this in support of the Septuagint reading is doubtful. That preference for the shorter reading should have the status of a “rule” is at best questionable¹⁹, and application of the principle to changes within individual words is particularly problematic. There are, to put it crudely, more ways to lose letters from texts than to add them in. Scribal emendation (deliberate or otherwise) can bring about additions or deletions. Physical damage to small areas of manuscript, on the other hand,

¹³ E. TOV, *Textual Criticism of the Hebrew Bible* (Minneapolis, MN 2001) 146; J.M. DINES – M.A.KNIBB, *The Septuagint* (London 2004) 88; JOBES – SILVA, *Invitation to the Septuagint*, 39.

¹⁴ A.A. ANDERSON, *Book of Psalms* (London 1981) 191.

¹⁵ BRIGGS – BRIGGS, *Psalms I*, 197.

¹⁶ Thus TERRIEN, *Strophic Structure*, 233, favours a reading reflecting the Septuagint, yet speaks of the strangeness of this noun, which he translates as “my wounded flesh”.

¹⁷ A search of the morphologically tagged Hebrew text in BibleWorks 8 gives 36 instances of nouns derived from עני (excluding proper names). In each case the reference seems to be the affliction itself. (An adjectival form widely used in reference to “the poor” or “the afflicted” also occurs.)

¹⁸ Noted in VILLANUEVA, *Uncertainty*, 88.

¹⁹ Cf TOV, *Use of the Septuagint*, 229.

is more likely to result in loss of letters, which may not be restored if some other interpretation of what is left is feasible. *Lectio brevior* is probably therefore of no major significance in instances such as this one. The question of *lectio difficilior* will be considered following discussion of the MT reading.

II. The Masoretic reading

עֲנִיתִי is morphologically a 2nd person singular qal *qatal* form from ענה, with a first person objective suffix. The choice of an appropriate translation for this root in Ps 22,22 is inextricably intertwined with syntactic considerations. The semantic field of relevance here can be broadly identified as “answering”²⁰. However the grammatical functioning of the English word “answer” means that it is not an ideal translation in the context of some interpretations of Ps 22,22. The problem is that if עֲנִיתִי is placed in direct syntactic relationship with מִקְרָנֵי הַמִּים, (as required by some, but not all, readings of the MT) it requires that the answer is in some sense “from” the “horns of the wild oxen”²¹. When the English word “answer” is placed in syntactic association with ‘from’, the preposition usually serves to specify not the problem concerning which an answer is sought, but rather the source of the answer²².

The context of Ps 22,22 makes it clear that the type of answer sought is rescue from danger. Whilst terms such as “rescue”, “save” or “deliver” undeniably have narrower semantic fields than “answer”, the semantic field of “answering” can encompass these other senses, when these senses are contextually indicated. Such indications are present here both in the way a source of danger

²⁰ Cf BDB, DCH.

²¹ The identification of the animals is uncertain. M. HEINEMANN, “An Exposition of Psalm 22”, *BSac* 147 (1990) 286-308, here 298, argues for the appropriateness of “oxen” based on a chiasmus within the Psalm.

²² It is possible that the phrase מִקְרָנֵי הַמִּים stands metonymically for God’s throne: see H. SIMAN-YOFRE, *Sofferenza dell’uomo e silenzio di Dio nell’Antico Testamento e nella letteratura del Vicino Oriente Antico* (Roma 2005) 48; G.W. COATS, “The Golden Calf In Psalm 22”, *HBT*, 9 (1987) 1-12, here 7. Given this interpretation the preposition would indeed specify the source of the help, and so translation using “answer” would work.

(קָרַנִי הַמִּים) is specified, and in the parallelism with הוֹשִׁיעֵנִי in the first part of v. 22²³. For these reasons, the translation “rescue” is acceptable if עֲנִיתֵנִי and מִקָּרְנֵי הַמִּים are taken to be syntactically linked, with the wild oxen (in parallel with the lion in the first half of the verse) symbolizing threat²⁴.

Critical to interpretation of עֲנִיתֵנִי in Ps 22,22 is the construal of its *qatal* form. The Hebrew conjugations have generally been viewed as grammaticalizing either tense or aspect. In tense based systems the *qatal* form is understood as primarily expressing past time²⁵. In aspect based systems it is viewed as perfective, in the sense of ‘viewing a situation as a whole’²⁶. Whilst the use of perfective verbs is often correlated with referencing of past situations, there is no necessary correspondence; “whole situations” may be referenced which are past, present, or indeed future²⁷.

עֲנִיתֵנִי in Ps 22,22 has often been interpreted as a perfective verb with past time reference. Following the Masoretic accentuation, it can be placed in direct relationship to מִקָּרְנֵי הַמִּים²⁸: “Save me from the mouth of the lion; from the horns of the wild oxen you have rescued me!” A variation on this approach is to construe עֲנִיתֵנִי as perfective but to dissociate it from the clause that it follows, taking

²³ There are a number of other instances in which forms derived from ענה are found in close association with form derived from ישע, notably Ps 20,7 and Ps 60,7.

²⁴ Equivalent approaches are taken by (for example) the New Revised Standard Version, the Nouvelle Edition Geneve, the Luther Bibel, and the Spanish Reina-Valera Update (1995). An alternative approach is taken by M.J. DAHOOD, *Psalms 1-50* (AB; Garden City, NY 1966) I, 142. He proposes that a different homonym of ענה meaning “conquer” or “triumph” is in view here. A usage similar to this is also identified in DCH (ענה v. 2: “cause to triumph, grant victory”); the examples suggested do however seem to make acceptable sense when “answer” is used.

²⁵ A recent defence of the tense based position is found in M.F. ROGLAND, *Alleged Non-past Uses of Qatal in Classical Hebrew* (Studia Semitica Neerlandica; Assen 2003) 131-132.

²⁶ B.K. WALTKE – M.P.O’CONNOR, *An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax* (Winona Lake, IN 1990) 480.

²⁷ Cf B. COMRIE, *Aspect. An Introduction to the Study of Verbal Aspect and Related Problems* (Cambridge 1976) 66.

²⁸ Cf M. BOULTON, “Forsaking God: a theological argument for Christian lamentation”, *SJT* 55 (2002) 67; HEINEMANN, “Exposition”, 299. See also New Revised Standard Version, King James Version, English Standard Version.

it instead as a separate exclamation that acts as a bridge between preceding lament and subsequent praise²⁹. Thus מִקֶּרְנֵי רִמִּים is to be understood as parallel to מִפִּי אֲרִיָּה, standing by ellipsis in relation to הוֹשִׁיעֵנִי: “Save me from the mouth of the lion and from the horns of the wild ox. You have answered me!” Alternatively the *qatal* form here could represent a gnomic perfective use³⁰. The New American Standard Bible takes this approach: “Save me from the lion’s mouth; from the horns of the wild oxen You answer me”. עָנִיתִי could even be taken as future oriented³¹, expressing what Waltke and O’Connor describe as a “perfective of confidence”³²: “Save me from the mouth of the lion; from the horns of the wild oxen, you will surely rescue me!”

A fundamentally different approach is to understand עָנִיתִי not as an indicative form, but as a precative form which functions as a plea: “Save me from the mouth of the lion, and from the horns of the wild ox rescue me!” The very existence of this usage has long been controversial³³. It has however been followed by some commentators, and is used in some contemporary translations³⁴.

²⁹ Cf H.-J. KRAUS, *Psalmen* (BKAT 15.1; Neukirchen-Vluyn 1989) I, 322; K. SEYBOLD, *Die Psalmen* (HAT 15; Tübingen 1996) 95. See also: New English Translation, New King James Version, Traduction Oecuménique de la Bible, Revidierte Elberfelder, CEI translation (2008).

³⁰ See WALTKE – O’CONNOR, *Biblical Hebrew Syntax*, 488. “Gnomic” designates verbs which make assertions without respect to time; this usage can thus encompass generalized and proverbial statements.

³¹ Cf T. LESCOW, “Psalm 22,2-22 und Psalm 88 - Komposition und Dramaturgie”, *ZAW* 117 (2005) 219.

³² WALTKE – O’CONNOR, *Biblical Hebrew Syntax*, 490.

³³ Thus GKC (§ 106n – footnote) unreservedly rejects this usage. I. PROVAN, “Past, Present and Future in Lamentations III 52-66: The Case for a Precative Perfect Re-Examined”, *VT* 41 (1991) 164-175, outlines the history of the debate (164-167). A valuable discussion of this usage is also found in DAHOOD, *Psalms I*, 20, who notes, *inter alia*, that it does occur elsewhere among the Northwest Semitic languages.

³⁴ M. BUTTENWIESER, *The Psalms, Chronologically Treated* (Chicago, IL 1938) 606; DAHOOD, *Psalms I*, 142; A. WEISER, *The Psalms. A Commentary* (London 1971) 218.; J. GOLDINGAY, *Psalms 1-41* (Grand Rapids 2006) 335. See also SIMIAN-YOFRE, *Sofferenza dell’uomo*, 48. Precative renderings of עָנִיתִי are found in the New International Version, the JPS Tanakh, the Spanish Reina-Valera Update (1995), and the French Nouvelle Edition de Geneve (1979). In German a similar approach is found in the Luther Bibel (although the Revidierte Lutherbibel opts for a perfect verb).

Significant support for this reading is found in the proposals of some recent writers on the Hebrew verbal system who question the primacy of tense or aspect, arguing instead that the most significant polarisation relates to modality³⁵. In other words the verbal system is not based first and foremost around the distinction between past and non-past (as in tense-based systems), or between complete and non-complete (as in aspect-based systems)³⁶. Rather the primary consideration is the distinction between indicative uses which articulate assertions about actual states of affairs, and modal uses which articulate projections about potential states of affairs, sometimes with a volitive element (expressing will) or a deontic element (expressing obligation).

A crucial point here is that the *qatal* form of the verb is essentially unmarked for modality: the form itself does not indicate that the verb is intrinsically modal, but neither is it fixed as non-modal³⁷. It must be stressed that this is not to claim that the *qatal*

³⁵ For example J.A. COOK, "The Vav-prefixed Verb Forms in Elementary Hebrew Grammar", *The Journal of Hebrew Scriptures* 8 (2008) 2-16; J. JOOSTEN, "Do the Finite Verbal Forms in Biblical Hebrew Express Aspect?", *Journal of the Ancient Near Eastern Society* 29 (2002) 49-70; A. WARREN, "Modality, Reference and Speech Acts in the Psalms" (PhD thesis, Cambridge University, Faculty of Oriental Studies, 1998) available at www.sil.org/acpub/repository/40251.pdf. [accessed 26/05/2010].

³⁶ Cf COOK, "Vav-prefixed Verb Forms", 11: "the indicative-modal distinction is the most salient one in the Hebrew verbal system". WARREN, "Modality", 67, makes the point more systematically from the point of view of generative syntax, arguing that mood is prior to tense and aspect in terms of deep structure. Whilst Warren argues for the priority of tense over aspect, J.A. COOK, "The Finite Verbal Forms in Biblical Hebrew Do Express Aspect", *Journal of the Ancient Near Eastern Society* 30 (2006) 21-35 (here 35) argues for the reverse, but they both subordinate these distinctions to the question of modality. This distinction is arguably also implicit in ROGLAND, *Non-past Uses of Qatal*, 133. He gives only limited attention to possible precative uses of *qatal* on the grounds that his focus is on indicative uses of the form, and a function reflecting deontic modality is outside the scope of his study. His use of this indicative / modal distinction in setting the limits for the study is revealing, since it implies that tense based interpretation of *qatal* is somehow subordinate to more important distinctions concerning modality.

³⁷ The way the argument is developed varies: JOOSTEN, "Finite Verbal Forms", 66, 67, argues that as a counterpoint to the modally unmarked *qatal*, the *yiqtol* form is fundamentally modal, and not imperfective, as is frequently asserted. WARREN, "Modality", 99, follows Joosten at this point, proceeding to argue that the *qatal*, unmarked for modality, is by default indicative, and in

form is “non-modal”, but rather that in and of itself it is (in Buttenwieser’s phrase) “equivocal as to modality”³⁸. The fact that the *qatal* form is unmarked for modality means that in the absence of other indicators it functions by default as indicative. However mood is a property of the sentence, not just of verb morphology, and so given appropriate contextual indicators, a verb morphologically unmarked for modality can function modally. If the modal-indicative distinction does indeed take priority in Biblical Hebrew, this means that contextual indicators of modality can effectively override the indicative default of the *qatal* form. Various different modal indicators may be involved, prominent among these being conditional clauses within which hypothetical statements can be expressed using *qatal* verbs³⁹.

In the context of these recent discussions about modality and the Hebrew verbal system, Buttenwieser’s comments about the precativ perfect are of considerable interest. He suggests that it is “as a rule found alternating either with the imperfect or the imperative, and it is by this alternation that we are able to identify it”⁴⁰. Thus in the context of a sentence, the deontic modality of which has been established by an imperative form, a *qatal* verb may undergo (to use Warren’s phrase) “mood neutralisation”⁴¹, and take on the modality of the sentence. This is clearly applicable to Ps 22,22 in which עָתִידִי is preceded by the imperative הוֹשִׁיעֵנִי⁴².

fact expresses the indicative in past time as opposed to participial forms which express the indicative in present time. COOK, “Vav-prefixed Verb Forms”, 11, differs from Joosten and Warren in arguing for imperfective uses of *yiqtol* forms in addition to modal forms, but likewise treats the *qatal* form as susceptible to both indicative and modal uses.

³⁸ BUTTENWIESER, *The Psalms, Chronologically Treated*, 20; cf D.J.A. CLINES, *On the Way to the Postmodern* (London – New York, 1998) 748.

³⁹ WARREN, “Modality”, 94. COOK, “Vav-prefixed Verb Forms”, 7, argues that the vav-prefixed form of the *qatal* verb is a “syntactically distinct modal use of the perfect conjugation in Biblical Hebrew”, suggesting that this type of use may have originated with conditional uses of the *qatal*, such that in sentences where the position of the verb was analogous to conditional clause word order, a modal meaning was implicit.

⁴⁰ BUTTENWIESER, *The Psalms, Chronologically Treated*, 25. Cf DAHOOD, *Psalms I*, 20: “The presence of imperatives or jussives in the immediate context is the surest clue to the precativ mode”.

⁴¹ WARREN, “Modality”, 94.

⁴² WARREN, “Modality”, 99, describes the precativ use of *qatal* in terms

Whilst the Septuagint retroversion of Ps 22,22 creates an effective parallelism with the preceding verse a precative reading of עֲנֵהנִי also creates a striking effect, in the form of chiasmic parallelism⁴³. Thus:

Save me		
-	from the mouth	of the lion,
- and	from the horns	of the wild oxen
rescue me!		

Given that both the Septuagint and MT readings provide striking poetic effects, stylistic considerations do not assist in choosing between them.

III. Septuagint and MT readings in the context of the whole Psalm

Various scholars have argued that the MT reading is preferable because, given a past perfect reading (“you have answered me”) it accounts better for the dramatic change in mood which they perceive in the Psalm⁴⁴. Either the Psalmist has experienced actual deliverance⁴⁵, or has received some clear indication, perhaps in the form of an ‘oracle of rescue’⁴⁶, that such deliverance is now

of “skewing”, and notes that it is most often used in address from “God to man” rather than from “man to God”, for which the similarly skewed “preceptive imperfect” is sometimes found (p. 91). He has further suggested that precative use of *qatal* is best understood as a politeness form – A. WARREN-ROTHLIN, “Politeness Strategies in Biblical Hebrew and West African Languages”, *Journal of Translation* 3 (2007) 67.

⁴³ Cf SIMIAN-YOFRE, *Sofferenza dell'uomo*, 48; GOLDINGAY, *Psalms 1-41*, 335. W.G.E. WATSON, “Internal Parallelism in Classical Hebrew Verse”, *Bib* 66 (1985) 372, points out the frequency with which such “internal” chiasmic parallelism (which is contained within a single verse) occurs in the Psalms.

⁴⁴ Cf M. GIRARD, *Les Psaumes Redécouvert*. De la Structure au Sens (Montréal 1996) I, 428, n. 26, who suggests that the view that the Psalmist still awaits deliverance fails to reckon with “la sérénité et l’explosion d’enthousiasme qui transpirent aux v. 23-32”.

⁴⁵ See R.D. PATTERSON, “Psalm 22: From Trial to Triumph”, *JETS* 47 (2004) 213-233, here 224. Cf also P. AUFFRET, “Tu m’as répondu”, *SJOT* 12 (1998) 102-129 (here 118), who describes the second part of v. 22 in terms of “la grâce faite aujourd’hui”.

⁴⁶ See KRAUS, *Psalmen*, 329; cf J.H. EATON, *Psalms*. Introduction and Commentary (Torch Bible Commentaries; London 1967), 74, who postulates “successive phases of a dramatic ritual”.

certain. This would account for the confidence of the praise in vv. 22-32, and would make sense of the language in v. 25 to the effect that the Lord has heard the cry for help of the afflicted one. However it can plausibly be argued that the dynamic within the psalm is more complex than a move from unrelieved lament to unconstrained praise, and that the second half of the Psalm represents an extended vow to praise conditional on a rescue which has not yet been experienced.

The claim that the second half of the psalm constitutes a vow to praise conditional on future rescue might seem problematic in view of the announcement of deliverance of the afflicted in v. 25. However it is worth noting that the description of rescue in v. 25 is expressed in the third person, not in the first person, unlike much of the rest of the psalm. It may be therefore that this claim functions much like that made in vv. 5-6: a declaration that God has showed himself in the past to be a faithful rescuer of those who cry out to him, giving grounds for authentic hope even if the Psalmist himself still awaits deliverance. There is no necessary link to a declaration of answer already received in the form of עָנִיתִי in v. 22. In view of this, the adoption of a reading reflecting the Septuagint, in which such a declaration of deliverance achieved is absent, does work in the wider context. Equally acceptable, however, is a precative reading of the MT text which reiterates the preceding plea for an answer.

On this basis neither the MT nor the Septuagint reading can be confidently described as the *lectio difficilior*. If it was accepted that the second half of the Psalm reflects an answer that has already been received, then the Septuagint reading could be identified as the harder reading, but only in comparison with a past perfective reading of the MT⁴⁷. The factors that would make the Septuagint reading the *lectio difficilior* apply equally to the precative reading of the MT and so this criterion cannot be used to favour either text. Given the possibility of reading the second half of the Psalm as an implicitly conditional vow to praise, interpreting עָנִיתִי as perfect is an unnecessary accommodation to a supposedly more “literal” understanding of the *qatal* form. Contextual skewing of the mood of *qatal* verbs (in the sense that the context

⁴⁷ Cf VILLANUEVA, *Uncertainty*, 88.

overrides the indicative default) does create particular problems for “literal” translations which purport to work on a “word for word” basis. Indeed if Tov is right to claim that the Septuagint translation of the Psalms was “slavishly literal”⁴⁸, this might account for the apparent absence of translations based on the precative *qatal* in the Septuagint Psalms⁴⁹. Furthermore it might be tentatively suggested that ignorance of, or disdain for, the precative option on the part of the Septuagint translators could have contributed to exegetical emendation of Ps 22,22, if they were, like numerous modern commentators, uneasy with a perfect interpretation of עֲנִיָּהּ.

The final word in Ps 22,22 is thus best understood as a precative perfect derived from עָנָה: “rescue me”⁵⁰. It retains the reading which is actually attested in the Hebrew text, whilst the text in the Septuagint must be derived from a Hebrew *Vorlage* that can at best be tentatively reconstructed and which might have had no independent existence outside the mind of an exegetically creative translator. Given the possibility of a modal nuance there need be no intrinsic awkwardness to the MT reading, and understanding it as a reiteration of the preceding plea for help is both stylistically and contextually effective.

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⁴⁸ Quoted in VILLANUEVA, *Uncertainty*, 87.

⁴⁹ BUTTENWIESER, *The Psalms, Chronologically Treated*, see index, cites numerous examples of precative *qatal* verbs in the Psalms. Almost without exception these are rendered as aorist indicatives in the Septuagint, apart from a couple of future indicatives (55,19; 65,12). The examples proposed by H. IRWIN, “Syntax and Style in Isaiah 26”, *CBQ* 41 (1979) 240-261, here 249, in Isa 26,15 are translated as imperatives in the Septuagint, suggesting that this use was not completely unknown.

⁵⁰ Alternatively (reading מִפִּי לֵאָוִם as standing by ellipsis in relation to הוֹשִׁיעֵנִי): “Save me from the mouth of the lion and from the horns of the wild oxen – Answer!” This omits the pronoun from עֲנִיָּהּ but retains the semantic ambiguity of the *qatal* form. “Answer!” like עֲנִיָּהּ, is best read as plea, but it can (also like עֲנִיָּהּ) be read as announcing an answer already received.

SUMMARY

The final word in the Masoretic Text of Ps 22,22, עָנִיתִי, has been understood by many commentators to represent a sudden declaration of rescue received. Others, often believing that such an announcement would represent a shift in the progression of the Psalm of excessive awkwardness, have preferred a variant reading reconstructed from the Septuagint in which such a dramatic transition is absent. Recent proposals regarding the semantics of the *qatal* form of the Hebrew verb strengthen the case for retaining the MT reading and interpreting it as a precativ perfect which reiterates the preceding pleas for deliverance.

On Jesus' Last Supper

Many attempts have been made to reconstruct Jesus' last days, beyond the scattered details provided by the canonical Gospels and some other sources. The main problems concern the Last Supper and the Passion narrative: firstly, there is a calendar discrepancy, since according to John the Friday of Jesus' crucifixion fell on the eve of Passover (Nisan 14), but for the Synoptics it fell on the day of Passover (Nisan 15); secondly, the main features of the Jewish Passover meal are the lamb, the unleavened bread and the bitter herbs, but the Eucharistic rite described in the Synoptics, although embedded in a Passover meal, focuses on bread and wine and the early Church never used unleavened bread for the weekly rite; thirdly, Jesus' trial before a powerless Jewish council (συνέδριον, Matt 26,59) on the night of a feast seems quite awkward. Looking beyond the NT we may add a fourth difficulty: at some point, the Greek speaking Church transferred the name "Passover" (πάσχα) to a yearly commemoration of Jesus' Resurrection, celebrated on a specific Sunday, while the Sunday on which the weekly rite was held used to be called "The Lord's Day" (*dies dominica*) and obviously had nothing to do with the annual Jewish Passover. As suggested by the description of these problems, the present essay aims to approach the last supper story as the key topic, by focusing on two sets of data: the ritual institutions, with some relevant Jewish background, and the testimonies of early Christian writers¹. It will be showed that tradition has reworked facts to expand their significance, especially in the Synoptics. The written products could be termed "literary icons".

I. An Old Problem

The Gospels state that Jesus' last supper occurred on a Thursday evening after sunset, and that the crucifixion took place

¹ This approach differs from the method of F. BOVON, *The Last Days of Jesus* (Louisville, KY – London: 2006).

on the following day before sunset, but they disagree on the Passover eve: for the Synoptics, it was on Thursday evening, but for John it was one day later, with the Passover that year falling on a Sabbath. Many attempts were made to solve the discrepancy, until the breakthrough proposed by Annie Jaubert², who proposed the use of different calendars: John followed the Babylonian lunar calendar of the Temple and the Synoptics adopted the Biblical solar calendar described in the book of *Jubilees*. Her proposal followed the recent discovery of the Dead Sea scrolls, some of which displayed the use of the solar calendar. One of the major features of this calendar is that the year is divided into four thirteen-week quarters, with each quarter starting on a Wednesday; consequently, the eve of Passover, the 14th of the first month, always falls on a Tuesday evening. Since, according to *Jubilees*, this was supposed to be the restoration of a lost Biblical calendar that stressed the Sabbath rest, she endeavored to find some traces of it in the Biblical narratives. *Jubilees* rewrites the primeval history and provides many dates. Observing that no event ever occurs on a Sabbath in this account, she successfully tried to apply the same pattern to the Biblical dates in the months that are numbered, and not named. Then she moved to some ancient Christian texts and discovered some signs indicating that Jesus' Last Supper took place on a Tuesday evening. This, she concluded, was the historical date of Jesus' last Passover.

Her theory has been challenged, especially by J. Jeremias. In his classical study, he first summarizes the previous attempts to solve the discrepancy. His own solution is to stick to the authority and testimony of the Synoptics, and to remove, one by one, the objections drawn from the fourth Gospel³. Following Schürer and many others, he assumes that Rabbinic Judaism accurately reflects circumstances in Jesus' time, a view that was current before the Qumran discoveries. Thus, he does not accept the idea of two calendars and discards any hint of divergence among the early Christian writers. Consequently, he refuses Jaubert's hypothesis. Jeremias' way of solving the problems raised by John looks like a

² A. JAUBERT, *The Date of the Last Supper* (Staten Island, NY 1965).

³ J. JEREMIAS, *The Eucharistic Words of Jesus* (Philadelphia, PA 1977) 41-84.

string of *ad hoc* arguments, but, on the other side, Jaubert's conclusions do indeed have some weaknesses. At least two problems should be considered, which concern the Synoptics: firstly, they clearly put the Last Supper on Thursday evening, which does not match the Passover day of the solar calendar; secondly, the bread and wine of the Eucharistic institution do not match the major elements of a traditional Passover. As a starting point, it is useful to assess the date of Jesus' death, for recent research has provided some new clues.

II. Was Jesus Crucified on Friday, 14 Nisan, 33 CE (April 3rd)?

In the official festival calendar of Judea, in use at the Jerusalem temple, Passover time was specified clearly: the slaughtering of the lambs was done between 3 and 5 p.m. on Nisan 14th (the first month) and the Passover meal began after sunset that evening. That calendar is lunar and Babylonian. It depends on the new moons and it had been calculated for many centuries. However, the Jewish custom was to declare a new month if the faintly glowing lunar crescent could be detected immediately after sunset at the end of the 29th of the current month; otherwise the new month was declared one day later. In other words, it was known that the lunar revolution lasts *ca.* 29.5 days, so that the legal lunar month has 29 or 30 days; if for some reason the new moon could not be seen on the 29th for two consecutive months, they were said to be "full" (i.e. of 30 days) and the following one was declared "hollow" (i.e. of 29 days only), even without any observation. Briefly stated, astronomy can accurately calculate the times of the new moons, and thus the date of Passover, at least in theory, but there is still a possible inaccuracy of one day, because of the uncertainty of detecting the new moon. But this uncertainty can be reduced by considering the conditions of visibility in Jerusalem and the orbital perturbations of the earth and moon.

During Pilate's tenure (26-36 CE), the useful results for the date of Passover (Nisan 14th) are as follows:

- in 27, Thursday April 10th (or the following day if the sky was clouded);
- in 30, Friday April 7th (or highly improbably the preceding day);

- in 33, Friday, April 3rd;
- in 34, Thursday, April 23rd (only if a leap month was inserted at the end of the previous year, because of exceptionally bad weather delaying the ripening of the barley firstfruits)⁴.

The first date is too early. Luke 2,1-2 states that John the Baptist began his ministry in the 15th year of Tiberius Caesar, that is 28–29 or 29–30, depending on the reckoning of the Seleucid era (340). According to John 2,20, the Temple reconstruction was started 46 years before Jesus came for his first public Passover in Jerusalem. Since Herod launched the work in Autumn 19 BCE, the earliest possible date is Passover 28.

The year 34 is only a remote possibility, for it falls more than a lunar month after the equinox. Moreover, it may conflict with the probable date of Paul's conversion (34).

So the two remaining possibilities are 30 and 33. Both match John's chronology⁵, as well as other details in the NT: the equation of Jesus' death with the slaughtering of the Passover lamb is given in John 1,29, as well as in 1 Cor 5,7. A Talmudic saying⁶ leads to the same conclusion (*b.Sanh* 43a): "On the eve of Passover, Jesus of Nazareth (or rather: "the Nazorean" יֵשׁוּ נוצרי) was crucified (lit. hanged, תלֵּאָדוּר)"; it is stated that the (Roman) authorities sought to defend him. According to Jewish law, he should have been stoned then exposed ("hanged", cf. Deut 21,22; *Ant.* 4:206). This short account cannot be directly dependent on the Gospels, for a list of five disciples is added, in which only one can be recognized (בִּרְתִּי, Matthew).

⁴ C.J. HUMPHREYS – W.G. WADDINGTON, "Astronomy and the Date of the Crucifixion", *Chronos, Kairos, Christos*. Nativity and Chronological Studies Presented to Jack Finegan (eds. J. VARDAMAN – E. M. YAMAUCHI) (Winona Lake, MI 1989) 165-182. These results refine the conclusions of K. SCHOCH, "Christi Kreuzigung am 14. Nisan", *Bib* 9 (1928) 48-56, who gave another possibility: Thursday, April 26th, 31 (now replaced with Tuesday, March 27th for that year).

⁵ And the *Gospel of Peter* 2,5, but it cannot be held as a major witness.

⁶ Uncensored, cf. R. RABINOVICZ, *Variae Lectiones in Mishnam et in Talmud Babylonicum*. Tract. Synhedrin (Leiden 1877) *ad locum*. The traditional editions have only "On the eve of Passover, Jesus was hanged", and G. DALMAN, *Jesus-Jeshua* (London – New York 1922) 89, tried to discard this testimony by surmising that it concerns another Jesus, a disciple of Yehoshua b. Perahiah (cf. *b.Sanh* 107b).

Up to now, it has been difficult to choose between 30 and 33 on literary grounds. The references given above about John the Baptist and Jesus' first Passover would suggest a slight preference for 33, but scholars are still divided. One could say that it is not a major problem, but Humphreys and Waddington introduce another set of astronomical considerations, the lunar eclipses visible from Jerusalem. Obviously such a phenomenon can only happen at the full moon, which implies that it can only be seen by night. A new calculation of the dates of these eclipses, which takes into account the effects of long-term changes in the earth's rate of rotation, gives a striking result. Out of 12 such eclipses that occurred during Pilate's tenure, only one falls on a Passover day, in 33. It occurred at moonrise, that is immediately after sunset, and had a 60% magnitude. More accurately, it started below the horizon at 3:40 p.m., reached a maximum at 5:15 p.m. and finished at 6:50 p.m.. The rising moon could be seen from Jerusalem at 6:20 p.m., with a shaded area⁷.

Now, in his Pentecost speech (Acts 2,20), Peter quotes the eschatological prophecy of Joel 3,1-5, which includes: "The sun shall be turned into darkness and the moon into blood, before the day of the Lord comes". It has been shown that this refers to both eclipses, solar and lunar⁸. Ancient writers used to describe the latter as "moon suffused with the color of blood". Indeed, this is the way its shaded area appears, especially when it is low on the horizon. Of course, the prophecy is a poetic view, for both types of eclipses cannot happen on the same day⁹. Moreover, the main point of the quotation is the pouring out of the Lord's Spirit. In Rev 6,12, when the Lamb opens the sixth seal, the seer says: "There was a great earthquake, the sun became black as sackcloth, the full moon became like blood". Here there is an allusion to Isa 13,10 (and possibly 50,3), somewhat rewritten: "The sun will be dark at

⁷ This eclipse had been calculated by the astronomer J.R. HIND, "Historical Eclipses", *Nature* 6 (1872) 251, but, with the data then available on the earth's rotation, he concluded that it occurred entirely before moonrise, i.e. that it could be seen from India, but not from Jerusalem.

⁸ Even in Rabbinic tradition, see *Yalq. Shim'oni* II:536.

⁹ The *Sibylline Oracles* § 111 solves the problem in a Messianic section: "And straight way dust is carried from heaven to earth and all the brightness of the sun fails". This view was traditional.

its rising and the moon will not shed its light". Again, we have the two eclipses at the same time. In Matt 24,29, Jesus says that before the appearance of the Son of Man "the sun will be darkened, the moon will not give its light and the stars will fall from heaven". All the ancient writers who comment on the prophecies make the connection with the passage on the Son of Man and with all the signs mentioned in the Gospels at Jesus' death (Matt 27,45.51): darkness over all the land, rent curtain, earthquake, resurrection of the saints. The darkness may refer, in general, to the two eclipses of the ancient prophecies, but Luke 23,45 specifies an eclipse of the sun, which explains the darkness. No ancient authority knows of any independent tradition on an eclipse of the moon¹⁰.

However, an eclipse at a Passover moonrise, at the very beginning of the feast, is a very rare phenomenon, albeit of limited scope. If it occurred immediately after Jesus' death, it may have been viewed as a heavenly harbinger, later developed into a full-scale apocalyptic picture, perhaps in connection with the destruction of Jerusalem, since Josephus himself gives numerous signs and oracles to this effect (*War* 6:288-315). No more can be said in support of the year 33. As for the eclipse of the sun in Luke 23, we shall see another possible explanation.

III. The Solar Calendar of the Book of *Jubilees*. Its Authority

Before reassessing Jaubert's hypothesis, it is necessary to discuss the non-lunar calendar of the book of *Jubilees*.

The Greek Fathers knew of this book as *Little Genesis*. The Greek version is lost, but it was the source of a Latin translation, which survives in several quotations, as well as an Ethiopian translation, titled *The Book of the Division of Times*. In his major study, R. Charles has shown that the original work was written in Hebrew¹¹, a conclusion confirmed by some fragments unearthed from the Qumran caves. The book rewrites the stories of Genesis,

¹⁰ As shown by a research on the *Thesaurus Linguae Graecae*. The proof texts adduced by Humphreys and Waddington are in fact inconclusive, for they always rely upon the prophecies and speak of both eclipses (*Acta Pilati*; Cyril of Alexandria, *In Johelem*, 3:1-4).

¹¹ R.H. CHARLES, *The Book of Jubilees or the Little Genesis* (London

with some omissions and changes; various details from Exod-Deut are added. The chronological frame is a kind of solar year of 364 days (*Jub* 6:33-38) and the history of the world is computed in periods of 50 years, between Jubilees. The days are reckoned from the morning, while in the lunar calendar they start in the evening, for the new month begins at sunset. The lunar rhythm of the months is ignored, but nothing is said of the adjustments necessary to match the actual natural year. Charles connected the work to the Pharisees, and dated it to the period following the Maccabean crisis, in the II cent. BCE.

The *Damascus Document*, a Hebrew text first discovered some time before 1900 in the *geniza* of the Qaraite synagogue of Cairo¹², cites as an authority this very *Book of the Division of Times* (*CD* 16:2-4). It is stated that Israel has corrupted the Sabbaths and festivals, and forgotten the secrets (*CD* 13:14-15). A new community, called the Covenant, has been created or sponsored by a Teacher of Righteousness (*CD* 1:7-10). According to *CD* 3:18-4:4, it includes priests, Levites, sons of Zadok and candidates¹³ (גֵרִים “foreigners”), with a reference to Ezek 44,15 quoted as “the priests and the Levites and the sons of Zadok”¹⁴. Obviously, this Covenant followed the book referred to, but the commentators were at a loss, since the only “sons of Zadok” known at that time were the Sadducees of Josephus and the NT, who could hardly be taken as faithful heirs of any kind of Pharisees.

The Qumran caves have delivered fragments of these two texts, as well as of many others in which the same calendar is in use.

1902); J. C. VANDERKAM, *The Book of Jubilees. A Critical Text* (Leuven 1989).

¹² S. SCHECHTER, *Documents of Jewish Sectaries, Edited from Hebrew MSS. in the Cairo Genizah Collection* (Cambridge 1910) II. For the Qumran versions, see P.R. DAVIES, *The Damascus Covenant. An Interpretation of the “Damascus Document”* (JSOTSup 25; Sheffield 1983).

¹³ This matches the four Essene “classes” mentioned by Josephus (*War* 2:150), without any status by birth; for a different view, see D. R. SCHWARTZ, “‘To Join Oneself to the House of Judah’ (Damascus Document IV,11)”, *RQ* 10 (1979) 435-446.

¹⁴ Which may be the original form. The MT reads וְהַכֹּהֲנִים הַלְוִיִּים בְּנֵי צָדוֹק, followed by the LXX. It cannot be concluded that the high priests from Zadok through the last Oniads were “Zadokites”, see É. NODET, *La crise maccabéenne* (Paris 2005) 242-254.

Some calendrical documents from the Qumran cave 4 describe the service cycle of the priestly courses and give the dates of the major festivals¹⁵. The introduction of one text refers to the Creation week (4Q 320:1-3): “[...] to its being seen from the east]to[sh]ine[in]the middle of the heaven at the foundation of Creation from evening until morning on the 4th day of the week”. Indeed, in Gen 1,16 we read: “The greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night”. This means that the Creation work started with a full moon. Moreover, every day of that week includes a piece of creation, an evening and a morning¹⁶. In other words, the days are reckoned from the morning — a fact which is not consistent with the lunar calendar. Thus, the main point of that introduction is to stress that the lunar calendar, which focuses on the new moon, is unbiblical. The year contains 364 days, divided into four quarters, starting with the solstices and equinoxes. Rabbinic tradition knows these divisions (תקופות) and states that each one spans 91 days and 7.5 hours. Thus this astral year has 365.25 days, which matches the Julian calendar.

We do not know how the solar calendar was adjusted to the solar year, which is longer by 1.25 day. Two possibilities were at hand, depending on the way of keeping the Sabbath cycles. A simple calculation shows that by adding seven weeks over 28 years, the discrepancy with the solar year is canceled out. Another possibility is to add one or two days every year, that is, to have some longer weeks or blank days. Some texts suggest such a correction. The corruption of the Sabbaths and festivals, cited

¹⁵ See S. TALMON – J. BEN-DOV – U. GLESSMER, *Qumran Cave 4. XVI – Calendrical Texts* (Discoveries in the Judaean Desert XII; Oxford 2001) 1-92. Some indications in the documents seem to reflect Babylonian astronomic traditions for the connection of the solar calendar and the phases of the moon, see J. BEN-DOV & W. HOROWITZ, “The Babylonian Lunar Three in Calendrical Scrolls from Qumran”, *Zeitschrift für Assyriologie*, 95 (2005) 104-120.

¹⁶ So the rabbinic tradition (Rashbam); the proof texts for the lunar calendar are eastern narratives: Est 4,16 “a fast for three days, nights and days”; in Dan 8,14 the persecutions are to last “2300 evenings and mornings” (see *t.Taanit* 2:5). Incidentally, the MT of Gen 2,2 conceals a problem, since it reads “and on the 7th day God finished his work”, while other witnesses (but not the Vulgate) have “on the 6th day”. It can be shown that the variant 7th is a correction that introduces the Temple Sabbath, for it begins in the evening (*War* 4:582; *m.Sukkah* 4:11), that is, before the end of the solar 6th day.

above, points to a calendar problem in both cases, and not to a problem in the details of the rites. According to *CD* 10:14-17, all work should be interrupted on Friday before sunset, which is not a dissident view, but in 3:12-16 it is said that the Sabbath belongs to the “hidden things” (נסתרות), implying that, from time to time, a week was longer by one day, according to some calendrical decision, or secret computing. An obscure passage of *1 Enoch* can be understood this way: in 74:12 we read “the sun and the stars bring in all the year exactly, so that they do not advance or delay their position by a single day”. This shows that there was a corrective system, which worked. However, the next chapter (75:1) speaks of “the four days which are not reckoned in the reckoning of the year”, which have been understood as the four 91st day at the end of the four quarters¹⁷, causing an error of four days every year and awkward problems for the Festival calendar¹⁸. The contradiction between the two chapters is blatant: it seems that a translator or a copyist has mixed up these days with some additional days fixing the solar year. Another hint is given in *Jubilees* 50:1-5: the Jubilee falls on the 50th year, after the seventh sabbatical year, and then a new cycle begins. So the rhythm of the seventh years is broken.

Whatever the intercalation system used, both calendars match every 28 years (in average, because of possible lunar leap years). The solar calendar has worked, at least for some time, and rabbinic tradition displays some knowledge of it. There is a “Blessing of the Sun” every 28 years, when the equinox falls on a Tuesday at sunset, recalling the Creation week¹⁹ (*b.Erubin* 56a). This view depends on an interpretation of that week according to the

¹⁷ A Qumran collection of Psalms mentions a special song for the פנימים days. S TALMON, “The Covenanters’ Annularium in the Psalm Scroll from Cave 11 (11QPs^a XXVII)”, *Fifty Years of Dead Sea Scroll Research* (eds. G. BRIN – B. NITZAN) (Jerusalem 2002) 204-219.

¹⁸ See R.H. CHARLES, *The Book of Enoch* (London 1892) 159-161, who observes that the Ethiopian text is corrupted, and thinks that the author strove to compare that calendar with the Greek 8-year cycle.

¹⁹ The date is calculated according to the years of 365.25 days (Julian calendar). So the calculated equinox moves ahead of the astral one by about 3 days every 400 years (the Gregorian correction: the solar year lasts about 365.2468 days). The most recent blessing was performed on April 6th, 2009, that is 17 days after the real equinox.

traditional lunar calendar, with Wednesday beginning on Tuesday evening. In fact, this explanation is secondary, for the interesting point is that the rite is performed at sunrise, facing east, which fits the solar calendar. The Feast of Booths provides another clue: according to *m.Sukka* 5:6, the people should say, when the procession reaches the eastern gate of the Temple: "Our fathers, when they were at this place, 'their backs (were) toward the Temple and their faces toward the east, to the sun' (Ezek 8,16). And we, our eyes (are) toward God (that is "westward, toward the Temple")". The context of the quotation speaks of twenty-five wicked men standing in the inner court, but the saying puts "our fathers" instead. They are criticized, but the worshippers — at least some of them — witness a change in rite. In fact, rabbinic tradition has inherited from both Pharisean and Essene traditions²⁰ and it is well known that, for their first prayer in the morning, the latter faced the rising sun (*War* 2:128 and 148). It is also well-known that the Therapeutae had a similar rite every 50th day (Philo, *Vita Contemplativa* § 64-90). We learn from *m.Rosh haShanah* 2:9 that, at the end of the 1st cent. CE, R. Gamaliel, the head of the rabbinic academy, told a sage to desecrate the Day of Atonement which he had computed, i.e. at a non-lunar date.

Another story is instructive. In Batanaea on the Golan heights, Herod the Great created a peaceful settlement and installed there a group of Babylonian Jews, who had been living in Syria. He gave them lands to break in and exempted them from taxes. Their leader, Zamaris, built a town, Bathyra and several strongholds (*Ant.* 17:23-26). Concerning this town, Rabbinic tradition²¹ reports the following event: it happened once that Nisan 14th fell on a Sabbath, and the elders of Bathyra did not know if the preparation of the Passover sacrifice should take precedence over the Sabbath rest or not. They asked Hillel, a Babylonian, who did not know either, but he eventually remembered a teaching he had heard in Judea. Then he was proclaimed Patriarch. The query itself is odd, for according to the lunar calendar Passover falls on a Sabbath every seven years,

²⁰ See S. LIEBERMAN, "The Discipline in the So-Called Dead Sea *Manual of Discipline*", *JBL* 71 (1952) 199-206.

²¹ *j.Pes* 6:1, p. 33a. Other versions are given in *t.Pasha* 4:13-14 and *b.Pes* 66a. See É. NODÉT – J. TAYLOR, *Origins of Christianity. An Exploration* (Collegeville, MN 1998) 141-152.

on average. It is difficult to imagine that such a major festival could have been forgotten by the founding body of rabbinic tradition. Now, Herod persecuted the Pharisees, but loved the Essenes. Josephus says that many religious Jews settled at Bathyra, for they felt secure there. In other words, some Essenes were there, and brought in their calendar and their Passover on Tuesday evening. For them, of course, the feast could never occur on a Sabbath. Moreover, they had a custom of eating the Passover lamb everywhere in the land of Israel²², and it makes sense that a Babylonian could be ignorant of how to proceed. The story tells us that at some point they had to switch to the lunar calendar.

To sum up, the solar calendar was in use at the end of the Second Temple period. According to *Jubilees*, it was of Biblical origin but it had been lost or forgotten by the majority of the Jews.

IV. Annie Jaubert's Breakthrough: The Solar Biblical Calendar

At the beginning of the study of the Qumran documents, before the solar calendar of *Jubilees* had been seriously considered, a calendrical problem appeared: the date of Pentecost, also called the Feast of Weeks, was consistently noted to be Sunday, the 15th day of the third month (11QT 19:11–23:2; *Jub* 6:17–21; 15:1; 44:1–8). This major festival included a renewal of the Sinaitic Covenant and the admission of neophytes (1QS 1:16–2:31). According to Lev 23,15–16, it falls on the day following the completion of seven full weeks (שבתות המימרה) counted from the day after the Sabbath of the wave offering of the barley sheaf (firstfruits). So, if Pentecost occurs on the III/15th, the seven weeks begin on Sunday I/26th. For mainstream Jewish custom²³, the day

²² According to the report of Al-Biruni. Moreover some unbroken bones of lambs, buried in little jars, were unearthed at Qumran; these are clues to Passover meals, see J.-B. HUMBERT, “L’espace sacré à Qumrân: Propositions pour l’archéologie”, *RB* 101 (1994) 161–214.

²³ So Philo, *Spec. leg.* 2:162; Josephus, *Ant.* 3:250; *b.Men* 65a. Josephus and Rabbinic tradition understand the “full weeks” as “7-day periods”, beginning on Nisan 16th without specific connection with a day of the week, so Pentecost may occur on any day. According to *t.Rosh ha-Shana* 1:15, it happened once that the Boethusians (ביתוסים or ביתוסים, maybe “house of

before, a "Sabbath", was the very day of Passover (Nisan 15th), according to the ancient meaning of the term²⁴ (see Deut 5,12.15). The discrepancy could be solved thanks to a Persian writer, Al-Biruni²⁵ (XI cent. CE). In a book on astronomy and calendars, he mentions a Jewish sect called *Maghariyya* ("Cave-dwellers", in Arabic), who insisted that the year begin on a Wednesday. The sect was given that name, because of the finding of its documents in the Qumran caves in the VII cent. CE. With this information the problem is resolved, since the 26th of the first month always falls on the Sunday that follows the week of the Unleavened Bread: the Covenanters were using the solar calendar of *Jubilees* — a conclusion that was later confirmed by other documents.

Then came A. Jaubert, who started from the hypothesis that the solar calendar was once a biblical feature, before being dropped at a later stage. She first observed in the narrative of *Jubilees* that the numerous dated activities or travels never occurred on the 4th of the first month, nor on the 11th of the same month, and so on from week to week. Taking these to be Sabbaths, she found that the beginning of the year, 1/1st, always fell on a Wednesday, thus independently confirming Al-Biruni's statement. It appeared, too, that the significant events always occurred on a Sunday, a Wednesday, or a Friday. Then she proceeded to look for signs of such a calendar in two directions: in the Bible and in early Christian writings.

Events in the Biblical narratives are less often dated than in *Jubilees*, but for those given with numbered, unnamed, months the pattern of Sabbaths and special days applies, especially in the Hexateuch and Ezekiel; it is a feature that may have existed before any systematic calendar. This general view has been accepted by

Essenes") bribed false witnesses of the new moon so that Pentecost may fall on a Sunday.

²⁴ See A. LEMAIRE, "Le sabbat à l'époque royale israélite", *RB* 80 (1973) 161-185; H. & J. LEWY, "The Origin of the Week and the Oldest West Asiatic Calendar", *HUCA* 17 (1943) 1-152.

²⁵ Detected by D. BARTHÉLEMY, "Notes en marge de publications récents sur les manuscrits de Qumrân", *RB* 59 (1952) 199-203, who stated that the *Jubilee* calendar was not utopic. Al-Biruni received his information from the Cairo Karaites, see S. POZNANSKI, "The Karaite Literary Opponents of Saadiah Gaonin", *Karaite Studies*. Edited with Introductions (ed. P. BIRNBAUM) (New York 1971) 131-234.

Biblical scholars²⁶, but with some reservations for the special days²⁷.

These observations can be strengthened by other details. The Creation week, discussed above, launches a non-lunar calendar, in which the days begin in the evening. However, in the definition of the days of the cultic calendar, they begin in the morning. For example, the Passover lamb must be slaughtered on the 14th of the first month and eaten in the evening, and the Israelites were brought out from Egypt “that very day”²⁸, which was the night of the 14th (Exod 12,6.17). The Day of Atonement falls on the 10th of the seventh month, but it begins “on the eve of the 9th day”. This implies a reckoning of the days from the morning, for otherwise it would start one day before (Lev 23,32). According to Lev 22,29-30, the sacrifices of thanksgiving shall be eaten on the same day, without leaving any of it until morning; so the “day” includes the following night. Indeed, this was the rule at the Jerusalem Temple (*b.Hulin* 83a). Any cleansing that was performed by daylight, only took effect after sunset of the same day (Num 19,7). Other passages suggest the same definition of the day²⁹.

Al-Biruni adds that for the *Maghariyya* the beginning of the first month is a Wednesday with a full moon. This cannot be true

²⁶ See H. CAZELLES, “Sur les origines du calendrier des *Jubilés*”, *Bib* 43 (1962) 202-212, who cites many ancient sources. A major disagreement was voiced by B.Z. WACHOLDER, “Patterns of Biblical Dates and Qumran’s Calendar: The Fallacy of Jaubert’s Hypothesis”, *HUCA* 66 (1996) 1-40, but he focuses on the later books (1-2 Chr, Est). In the Bible, the lunar calendar appears when the months are given Babylonian names (Nisan, Iyyar, and so on).

²⁷ See J.C. VANDERKAM, “The Origin, Character and Early History of the 364-Day Calendar: A Reassessment of Jaubert’s Hypothesis”, *CBQ* 41 (1979) 390-411; P.R. DAVIES, “Calendrical Change and Qumran Origin: An Assessment of VanderKam’s Theory”, *CBQ* 45 (1983) 80-89.

²⁸ A special problem arises regarding the seven days of Unleavened Bread: they begin on the 15th according to Lev 23,6 and Num 28,17, but they run from the evening of the 14th to the evening of the 21st. This is an anticipation prompted by the narrative, see É. NODET, “Pâque, azymes et théorie documentaire”, *RB* 114 (2007) 499-534.

²⁹ See J.Z. LAUTERBACH, *Rabbinic Essays* (Cincinnati, OH 1951) 446-450. Other instances were given by J. MORGENSTERN, “The Sources of the Creation Story”, *American Journal of Semitic Languages and Literature* 36 (1919) 176. R.T. BECKWITH, *Calendar and Chronology, Jewish and Christian* (Leiden 1996) 3-6, challenges the significance of these passages, but his short biblical analyses are unsatisfactory.

every year, but it is clearly true for the Creation week: on the 4th day of the first year the lesser luminary was a full moon. It seems that Al-Biruni was aware of a general introduction like that of 4Q 320 quoted above³⁰. As for the thesis of a hidden calendar, it should first be noted that the most common Hebrew word for "month" is חֹדֶשׁ³¹, whose natural meaning is "new", that is, "new moon". Any other meaning is a distortion. Now, at the time of the exodus from Egypt, a new calendar was introduced (Exod 12,2): "This month shall be for you the beginning of the months". Rabbinic tradition understands that this reckoning from Nisan gives the dating of the festivals and the kings, while the Creation year begins at Tishri, six months later (*m.Rosh ha-Shanah* 1:1), all according to the lunar calendar with its Babylonian month names. But the night of the first Passover in Egypt and the departure of the Israelites occurred in full darkness (Exod 12,29-31), which is to say, at the time of a new moon. Elsewhere it is said that Passover has to be celebrated לַמּוֹעֵד חֹדֶשׁ הָאֲבִיב (Exod 23,15; Deut 16,1); this is usually translated "at the appointed time in the month of Abib", but can be better understood as "at the appointed time at the new moon of Abib", especially since both passages state that the feast is a memorial of the departure from Egypt. The moon signals the specific time (see Gen 1,14), but as in the case of the Creation week, the plain meaning refers only to the first year and no explanation is given for any adjustment in the following years. Something is hidden — or never existed. Later, in the Hellenistic and Roman periods, the Babylonian lunar calendar prevailed, but we do not know when and how the calendrical change was enforced³². Anyhow, the purpose of both *Jubilees* and the *Cairo* document makes sense, although we do not know which secret

³⁰ See too J.T. MILIK, *Ten Years of Discoveries in the Wilderness of Judaea* (London 1959) 152.

³¹ The other one יָרַח derives directly from "moon", and indicates a period of about 30 days, without any calendrical implications, see Exod 2,2; Deut 21,12; 2 Kgs 15,13.

³² Some think this occurred in Palestine after the battle of Karkemish in 604 BC, after which Palestine came under the Babylonian supremacy, see E. AUERBACH, "Der Wechsel des Jahres-Anfang in Juda im Lichte der neugefundenen babylonischen Chronik", *VT* 9 (1959) 113-121; A. LEMAIRE, "Le sabbat à l'époque royale israélite", *RB* 80 (1973) 161-185. But no hint of the change can be found in Jer and 2 Kgs. Later Ezra still uses the numbered

tradition lies behind them. A. Jaubert is right, but her discovery was not at all obvious.

In fact, one may wonder whether this “Biblical” calendar ever was in use, because of the lack of any adjustment device: the texts cited (Creation, Passover) focus only on the first year.

V. Annie Jaubert’s Breakthrough: The Date of the Last Supper

The second part of Jaubert’s study deals with ancient Christian liturgy. With respect to the special days, the *Didakhe* prescribes a fast on Wednesdays and Fridays³³ (*Did* 8:1) and the congregation convenes on Sundays (Acts 20,7; *Did.* 14:1; Justin, *Apology* 1.67.7), the Lord’s day (Rev 1,10). Early traditions concur on the three important days of the old *Jubilees* calendar. Pentecost falls on a Sunday, but its dating depends on Easter, which falls on the Sunday that follows the first full moon after the vernal equinox. So it seems that both calendars are mixed up, but the older one did not disappear. This suggests that Jesus and/or the early Christians had some connections with groups using the *Jubilee* calendar and so Jesus would have celebrated his last Passover on a Tuesday evening. The discrepancy between the two Passover dates is, to some extent, reflected in the anointing at Bethany: according to Matt 26,2 and Mark 14,1 it occurred two days before Passover, but in John 12,1 it was six days before.

Other traditions provide additional clues. The *Didascalia Apostolorum* is a Syriac work written around 200 CE, in a Jewish Christian milieu quite removed from the Greek NT, especially from Paul. The text has been poorly transmitted, but it witnesses some narratives and customs independently from the Gospels. Concerning the days of fasting, it states that Jesus was arrested on a Wednesday (*Didascalia* 21.14.5-18; 17.7-8; 19.2). One of these passages is blurred by a tradition of fasting on Monday and strives to explain that the Passover had been brought forward by the Jewish authorities that year, out of fear of the crowd. The fast

months (Ezra 3,1; 7,9), while Nehemiah employs the Babylonian system (Neh 1,1; 2,1; 6,15).

³³ Which became later *dies stationis* or “guard days”, see C. MOHRMANN, “*Statio*”, *VigChr* 7 (1953) 221-245.

mentioned in Matt 15 is in a longer form: "The days will come, when the bridegroom is taken away from them, and then they will fast in those days"; the addition is witnessed by the Western Text and Luke 5,35. The plural form alludes to Wednesday and Friday. The parallel passage in Mark 2,20 has a singular "in that day", which suggests a reduction of the fasting to Friday only.

Epiphanius of Salamis (315-403), though sometimes confusing, but often helpful, because of his uncritical way of putting sources together, gives various traditions. He knows the *Didascalia* and in the same way says that Jesus was arrested on the Wednesday and crucified on the Friday without noticing that this contradicts the Gospels (*Panarion* 51:26; *De fide* § 22). In another fragment³⁴, he indicates the performance of a customary rite in the Passion week, on Thursday at the 9th hour³⁵, "as a memorial of the breaking of the bread". This could be close to the chronology of the Synoptics, but he insists that Jesus was not arrested the following night.

At some point the authority of the canonical Gospel elicited some changes in these traditions. Patriarch Peter of Alexandria (300-311) speaks of two fasting days, and explains that Wednesday commemorates the plotting of the Jews with Judas (*PG* 18.508b). The *Apostolic Constitutions* says, too, that the fast on Wednesday recalls Judas' betrayal (5:15 and 7:23). In 5:14 the author was forced to say that Jesus held two suppers: on Tuesday, when he foretold Judas' betrayal, and on Thursday, when he ate the Passover lamb and instituted the Eucharist. Other scraps of tradition go the same way. The Gospels eventually prevailed, but earlier traditions can be traced over quite a long period.

From all this material, A. Jaubert concludes that the views of John and the Synoptics cannot be merged, for they use different calendars. The former follows the lunar calendar of the Temple, the "fatherland" of Jesus (John 4,44), the latter the solar calendar. So the last Passover meal was held on Tuesday evening, uncon-

³⁴ See K. HOLL, "Ein Bruchstück aus einem bisher unbekannten Brief des Epiphanius", *Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Kirchengeschichte* (Tübingen 1928) II, 204-224. He quotes a work of bishop Victorin (died in 303), which mentions Jesus' arrest on the Wednesday.

³⁵ The earliest official mention of the Maundy Thursday celebration was in the 3rd Council of Carthage (397 CE), see J.D. MANSI, *Sacrorum conciliorum nova et amplissima collectio* (Graz 1960) III, 885.

nected with the Temple festival and its huge crowds of pilgrims. For Josephus (*War* 6:423-425) and the Rabbinic tradition (*m.Pes* 9:5), the slaughtering of the Passover lambs had to be done in the Temple, because that was the procedure at Josias' Passover (2 Chr 35,1.14), but other customs are mentioned, especially in Galilee (*m.Pes* 10:3). For Al-Biruni's "cave-dwellers", it simply has to be performed within the Land of Israel.

A Passover celebration was practiced by some Christians, of whom the best known are the "Quartodecimans". Their name indicates that they were celebrating Passover on Nisan 14th. Eusebius tells us (*HE* 5.24.3-6) that they resided in Asia Minor. They used to celebrate the Passover "according to the Gospel", in keeping with the tradition of John and his disciple Polycarp, the bishop of Smyrna³⁶. Their Passover was held at night and it lasted until 3 a. m., that is, immediately after the Jewish Passover meal. Epiphanius (*Pan.* 70.11.4) knew of them and adds that during that meal they fasted for those among their Jewish brothers who did not believe in Jesus. Following the Jewish expectation that the Messiah would come during the Passover night³⁷, they awaited the return of Jesus in the middle of that night. In fact, the main feature of the fast was abstention from the Passover lamb³⁸, since Jesus had brought an end to celebrating Passover on earth (see Luke 22,15-16). Such a rite matches the fourth Gospel, its lunar calendar and the hope that Jesus would return shortly after his death, but it is hard to reconcile with the Synoptics and with a Passover commemoration before the crucifixion.

³⁶ See B. LOHSE, *Das Passafest der Quartodecimaner* (BFCT 2/54; Gütersloh 1953).

³⁷ As given by the "Poem of the Four Nights", see R. Le DÉAUT, *La Nuit Pascale*. Essai sur la signification de la Pâque juive à partir du Targum d'Exode XII 42 (AnBib 22; Rome 1963). In *Ant.* 17:29, Josephus reports a custom of opening the Temple gate in the middle of the Passover night, but refrains from giving the meaning. As for his possible bias, it should be stressed that he never speaks about any eschatological tenet.

³⁸ According to *m.Pes* 10:8 it is forbidden to conclude the Passover meal with an *efikoman*. The word is a transcription of ἐπὶ κῶμον "to the banquet". The best explanation is given in *j.Pes* 10:4, p. 37d, where it is said that at the end of the Passover meal it is forbidden to go to another congregation (חבורה); this may well refer to the meal of the Quartodecimans.

VI. Traces of the Solar Calendar in the Synoptics

Besides the discrepancy of the Passover date following the anointing at Bethany, further Synoptic evidence for the Solar Calendar can be detected.

The most remarkable instance of this is the mention of a solar eclipse³⁹ at the 6th hour in Luke 23,45; the parallels speak only of darkness "over all the earth" (Matt 27,45; Mark 15,33). A solar eclipse implies it was the day of a new moon, but in the sequel, after Jesus' burial, Luke 23,54 has "it was the day of Preparation, and the Sabbath was dawning" (ἐπέφωσκεν)⁴⁰. This would indicate that the moonrise occurred at the very beginning of the Sabbath, immediately after sunset, at the time of a full moon, in a way that exactly matches the Passover day according to the lunar calendar and the Johannine chronology. The Persian sage Aphrahat, an Assyrian writer of the IV cent., who used only the lunar calendar, uses a typical phrase when referring to the Exodus Passover as "the light which enlightens the 15th" (*Demonstration on the Passover*, § 6-7). In his view, this is a full moon, which cannot be reconciled with the darkness of the departure from Egypt. The undeniable conclusion is that the solar eclipse is a literary device, which may have been prompted by two somewhat inter-related considerations: an apocalyptic development of the lunar eclipse mentioned above (§ 1), and a reminder of the full moon of the solar calendar, at least for the very first year. Thus, the eclipse would suggest a transition towards the beginning of a new Creation, starting with a full moon.

³⁹ A secondary variant reads εσκοτισθη ο ηλιος, a harmonization with Matt 24,29.

⁴⁰ The plain meaning cannot be "evening", in spite of a strange Rabbinic statement (*m.Pes* 1:1): "At the lighting-up time (אור): on the 14th of Nisan we must search for the leaven (חמץ) — by the light (אור) of a candle". The first part simply depends on Exod 12,15 "on the first day (= "the 14th of the first month") you shall eliminate leaven from your premises". There the day begins on the morning (as noted in *j.Pes* 1:1), but if the lunar calendar is introduced ("Nisan", a Babylonian name), the 14th has begun in the evening, hence the candles in the second part. As a result, the first "light" comes to mean "evening" (with a reference to the light of the stars, Ps 148,3; see *b.Pes* 2ab; the full moon is ignored).

If this were an isolated finding, it would not be very significant, but more evidence can be found. In Luke 6,1, the Western Text⁴¹ (WT) displays an interesting variant:

On a Sabbath (WT adds δευτεροπρώτῳ, “second-first”), when he was going through the grain fields, his disciples plucked and ate some heads of grains, rubbing them in their hands.

The WT variant is clearly a *lectio difficilior*, which should be preferred, for its removal as meaningless by other copyists made sense. Nevertheless, an explanation has been suggested⁴², which involves the *Jubilees* calendar: the counting of the weeks for Pentecost starts from the second Sabbath after Passover I/25th, so that it could be termed “second-first”. This solution is ingenious, but the date is too early for the wheat crop. Now an Essene variant of that calendar⁴³ includes a row of Pentecosts (seven-week periods), corresponding to the firstfruits of the wheat (with an offering of bread), of the grapes (new wine, must) and of the olives (oil). In such a system, “second-first” can be easily understood as the first Sabbath of the second Pentecostal cycle, when the wheat crop is available after the first Pentecost rite. Thus, an eschatological meaning appears: the new crop symbolizes the new kingdom, in which all the days are holy in the same way⁴⁴.

⁴¹ See M.-É. BOISMARD – A. LAMOUILLE, *Le Texte occidental des Actes des Apôtres, reconstitution et réhabilitation* (Études et recherches sur les civilisations, Synthèse 17; Paris 1984); M.-É. BOISMARD, *Le texte occidental des Actes des Apôtres*. Édition nouvelle entièrement refondue (EB 40; Paris 2000). On the WT being an early version of Acts, see M.-É. BOISMARD – A. LAMOUILLE, *Les Actes des deux Apôtres* (EB 12-14; Paris 1990). In spite of its being poorly witnessed by the major uncial manuscripts, they argue that it was the source of the earliest translations (Old Latin, Syriac) and the most ancient quotations. The passage quoted here, as well as the shorter form of the Lukan institution of the Eucharist suggest that this view should be extended to Luke. See also A.F.J. KLIJN, *A Survey of the Researches into the Western Text of the Gospels and Acts*. Part Two: 1949-1969 (VTS 21; Leiden 1969).

⁴² See J.-P. AUDET, “Jésus et le ‘calendrier sacerdotal ancien’; autour d’une variante de Luc 6,1”, *Sciences ecclésiastiques* 10 (1958) 361-383, but, convinced that the WT variant is secondary, he is at a loss to explain its appearance.

⁴³ Witnessed by Philo’s *Therapeutae* (*Vita contempl.* § 64-90), some Qumran documents (11 QT 18-22 and 43; 4 QMMT A), as well as the Slavonic version of Josephus’ *War* 2:147.

⁴⁴ A similar conclusion can be drawn from another WT variant in the same passage (v. 6): “That day he saw a man working on the Sabbath and told him:

A trace of that very calendar can also be noted in Acts 2,13. In the Pentecost narrative, some take to mocking the apostles, saying: "They are filled with new wine". Then Peter replies (v. 15): "These men are not drunk, since it is only the third hour of the day". This "new wine" cannot be available before the grape harvest, some two months after the normal Pentecost. Incidentally, the timing indicated in Acts 2,1 is strange: "It happened, when the day of Pentecost was being fulfilled (συνπληροῦσθαι; see Luke 9,51)". The verb denotes a process close to completion, and omitting it would make the phrase clearer in its actual context: "on the day of Pentecost". Indeed, the WT has a plural "when the days were being fulfilled", which provides a glimpse of an earlier meaning — a Pentecostal period during which new wine is drunk. In other words, this alludes to a second Pentecost period. Moreover, Peter's speech has an eschatological meaning, especially with the quotation of Joel mentioned above, and this wine may have had a ritual meaning to the same effect; the eschatological meal in 1 QSa 2,11-22, with the two Messiahs (son of Aaron and son of David) and all the tribes, shows the Messiah son of Aaron opening it with a blessing of the firstfruits of bread and wine⁴⁵ (תִּירוֹשׁ).

It is noteworthy that all the instances discussed above belong to Luke-Acts.

VII. Pending Problems

In all four Gospels, the Passion narrative spans one full day, from Thursday at sunset to Friday at sunset, and displays a significant concentration of events. The fourth Gospel, however, entails only one major issue: the twofold trial of Jesus before Pilate, consisting of a first session in the *praetorium* (John 18,28), which concludes with a scourging, and then a second session at a place called Gabbatha (19,13). In other respects, the Jewish context is consistent, including the absence of a competent Sanhedrin,

'Man, if you know what you are doing, blessed are you, but, if you do not know, you are cursed for you are breaking the Law'".

⁴⁵ According to *t.Ned* 4:3, תִּירוֹשׁ in the Bible means "wine" (Deut 11,14); but later the term designates a sweet, unfermented drink. However, in 11QT 43:7-9, it is clearly "new wine", as stressed by MILIK, *Ten Years*, 105.

because from the time of Coponius, the first *praefectus* of Judea (around 6 CE), all the power was concentrated in the hands of the Roman ruler; the Jewish authorities were reduced to a council around the high priest, whose authority concerned only Temple matters⁴⁶. Even the priestly garments and ornaments for the festivals were controlled by the Romans (*Ant.* 18:93). As for the chronology of the fourth Gospel, the crucifixion occurs on the eve of the Sabbath, on which Passover fell that year, at precisely the time of the slaughtering of the Passover lambs, a fact which developed into the full-scale symbol of Jesus as a slain lamb (John 1,29; Rev 5,6.9-10). In 1 Cor 5,7, Paul speaks of the sacrificed “Christ, our Passover lamb”. Justin Martyr (*Dial.* 40:3) gives a precise description: “When the lamb is roasted (see Exod 12,9), it is arranged in such a way as to represent the cross: A spit goes right through it from the lower limbs to the head, another spit is at the shoulder, to which the paws are fastened”⁴⁷. This custom is attested by Rabbinic sources, for we read in *m.Pes* 7:1 that the lamb is to be roasted on a spit of dry wood. (Damp wood would give off steam, with an effect similar to that of boiling, whereas a metal spit, heated up in the fire, would play a part in cooking the meat.) The entrails and internal organs would be cooked in a pot and not roasted directly over the fire. For this reason, R. Aqiba requires them to be fastened on another branch fixed to the paws. In other words, there has to be a second, transverse spit forming a cross with the first. Thus, it was a very simple step to identify Jesus with the Paschal lamb.

Regarding the Synoptics, taken together, the position is more complicated. Even if Jesus had eaten his last Passover meal on a Tuesday evening, one must explain why it was then transferred to Thursday, in spite of the persistence of some traditions connected with the original date. Besides this calendrical problem, the Synoptic accounts are filled with features that are, for the most part, at odds⁴⁸ with historical reality and Jewish legal prescriptions:

⁴⁶ According to *b.Sanh* 41a, the high priest Annas (Ananus, אַנָּאס) had been settled into a shop (חנות), a scornful wordplay. He was the first high priest appointed by a Roman ruler (Quirinius), in 6 CE (*Ant.* 18:34).

⁴⁷ Melito of Sardis, fr. 9, seems to refer to this when he writes: “As a lamb he was crucified (or spitted, ἐσταυρώθη).”

⁴⁸ To date, the attempts to solve these difficulties, while maintaining the

the trial before a powerless Sanhedrin in the middle of the feast; the release of Barabbas after the Passover meal, whereas he should have been able to take part in it (*m.Pes* 8:6); Simon of Cyrene returning from working in the fields during the feast (Luke 23,26), and so on. The strange features of the Eucharistic institution have been alluded to above⁴⁹. Prominent among them is the single cup of wine for all, as this cannot be compared with the four cups prescribed by Rabbinic tradition for the Passover meal (*m.Pes* 10:1); moreover, it is expounded (*b.Pes* 109a) that the festival was to be celebrated by eating meat (Deut 12,18) when the Temple was extant, but after its destruction wine was to be used instead (see Judg 9,13).

In any case, the most ancient tradition is certainly the one given in 1 Cor 11,23, where it is written: "The Lord Jesus, on the night when he was delivered". The same wording is found in the ancient canonical-liturgical texts (*Apostolic Constitutions* 8:12; Hippolytus of Rome, *Apostolic Tradition*, § 8). These texts are remarkable for the fact that they do not mention Passover, neither do they state that this occurred the day before his death. These issues obviously require further studies.

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SUMMARY

In the Gospels, Jesus' last supper involves custom and legal issues: chronological discrepancies between the Synoptics and John, a mock trial before the Sanhedrin, two trials before Pilate (John), and so on. This study focuses on the calendar problem, a topic of utmost importance in ancient Judaism, and follows A. Jaubert's hypothesis, against J. Jeremias' now classical view: the Synoptics display a somewhat loose connection with the *Jubilees* sectarian calendar, while John's chronology seems to be historically more accurate.

precedence of the Synoptics, have tended to use *ad hoc* arguments, and the main result has been to underline the problems, see S. LÉGASSE, *Le procès de Jésus. La Passion dans les quatre évangiles* (LD 3; Paris 1995).

⁴⁹ See J. MANN, "Rabbinic Studies in the Synoptic Gospels", *HUCA* 1 (1924) 339-351.

Gal 3,28 and its alleged relationship to rabbinic writings

In Paul's explicit use of the statement, οὐκ ἔνι Ἰουδαῖος οὐδὲ Ἑλλήν, οὐκ ἔνι δοῦλος οὐδὲ ἐλεύθερος, οὐκ ἔνι ἄρσεν καὶ θήλυ in Gal 3,28, scholars have noted similar sayings found in rabbinic writings and proposed that the latter could be a possible insight for a discussion of the meaning and theology of Gal 3,28¹. This proposition, though interesting, is more assumed than proved. Scholars usually speak of the possible connection between Gal 3,28 and the three blessings of gratitude found in rabbinic texts, but they devote too little attention to the question of establishing what kind of connection there is. Others allow their interpretation of the three blessings of gratitude found in rabbinic texts to influence their exegesis of Gal 3,28 without questioning in what way this Pauline passage in question reflects a similar expression found in rabbinic writings, and whether or not there is any relationship between these Christian and Jewish texts.

The present study seeks to re-examine the assertion of the connection between Gal 3,28 and the three blessings of gratitude found in rabbinic writings, asks deeper questions concerning the social-historical context of these alleged sources and shows that the discussion of the relationship between Gal 3,28 and the three

¹ Scholars have identified four possible inspirational sources behind Gal 3,28. The first is that there is a possible influence of the three expressions of gratitude found in Greek sources on Gal 3,28. The second argues that there is a possible relationship between Gal 3,28 and the three blessings of gratitude found in rabbinic texts. The third is that in Gal 3,28 Paul is using a pre-Pauline baptismal formula which in itself could have been related to either the rabbinic or the Greek sources. The fourth source is limited to Gal 3,28c, namely Gen 1,27b LXX. The discussion concerning the relationship between Gal 3,28 and these different sources require different articles. In the present article, we focus on the problem of the three blessings of gratitude found in rabbinic texts as these texts relate to Gal 3,28. See, for instance, F.F. BRUCE, *The Epistle to the Galatians*. A Commentary on the Greek Text (NIGTC; Grand Rapids, MI 1982) 187; R.N. LONGENECKER, *Galatians* (WBC 41; Dallas, TX 1990) 157; W.A. MEEKS, "The Image of the Androgyne: Some Uses of a Symbol in Earliest Christianity", *HR* 13 (1974) 165-208, 167-168.

blessings of gratitude found in rabbinic texts is much more complex than scholars have thus far imagined. To do that, we are going to situate the four versions of the three blessings of gratitude found in Jewish texts in their social-historical context. We will then compare Gal 3,28 with the three blessings of gratitude found in rabbinic texts focusing on the basic question, to what extent, if any, these Jewish formulas may be connected to Paul’s message in Gal 3,28?

1. *An assessment of the three blessings of gratitude in context*

a) Different versions of the three blessings of gratitude compared

It has been noted that there are at least four versions of the three blessings of gratitude found in Jewish texts. The most common one states: “Rabbi Meir (some translations use Judah) used to say, ‘a man is obliged to bless three blessings on every day’ these are the ones ‘For not making me a gentile (non Jew), for not making me a woman, for not making me a boar”².

<i>Tosefta</i> ³	Palestinian Talmud ⁴	Babylonian Talmud ⁵	The Genizah fragments of the Palestinian order of Service ⁶
Rabbi Judah says: three blessings you have to bless on every day	Rabbi Judah says, “three sayings must a man recite every day”	Rabbi Meir used to say, “a man is obliged to bless three blessings on every day” these are the ones	

(to be followed)

² See J. NEUSNER (trans.), *The Talmud of Babylonia*. An American Translation.Vol. XXIX.B: Tractate Menahot, Chapters 4-7 (Atlanta, GA 1991) 29-30. See also *Der Babylonische Talmud* (ed. L. GOLDSCHMIDT) (Berlin 1935) *Menahot* 43b; Y.H. KAHN, “Gentiles, Slaves and Women: The Blessings ‘Who Did Not Make Me’”, *My People’s Prayer Book* (ed. L.A. HOFFMANN) (Woodstock, VT 2001) V, 17-34, 17.

³ The first of these is found in *Berachot* 6:23 of the *Tosefta*, dating to the third century C.E. The translations are mine. “Thank you for not making me a

<i>Tosefta</i> ³	Palestinian Talmud ⁴	Babylonian Talmud ⁵	The Genizah fragments of the Palestinian order of Service ⁶
ברוך שלא עשני נוי	ברוך שלא עשאני נוי	שלא עשאני נוי	ברוך אתה יי אלהינו מלך העולם אשר בראת אותי אדם ולא בהמה
ברוך שלא עשני אשה	ברוך שלא עשאני בור	שלא עשאני אשה	איש ולא אשה (זכר ולא נקבה)
[ברוך] שלא עשני בור	ברוך שלא עשאני אשה	שלא עשאני בור	ישראל ולא נוי מל ולא ערל חפשי ולא עבד (טהור ולא מאט)

gentile (non Jew), thank you for not making me a woman, (thank you) for not making me a boar". The Hebrew text is taken from <http://www.mechon-mamre.org/b/f/fl1.htm> (9 April 2009). For בור other sources have "ignoramus". For other translations, see *Die Tosefta*. Rabbinische Texte, Seder 1: Zeraim (eds. E. LOHSE – G. MAYER) (Stuttgart 1999) 18.

⁴ In the Palestinian Talmud, dated between late fourth and or early fifth centuries, the three blessings are found in *Berachot* 9.1, 63b. The translations are mine, "Thank you for not making me a gentile (non Jew), thank you for not making me a boar, thank you for not making me a woman". The above Hebrew text is accessed 10 April 2009 from <http://www.mechon-mamre.org/b/r/r1109.htm>.

⁵ In the Babylonian Talmud, dated between the late fifth and late eighth centuries, the three blessings are found in *Menahot* 43b. The Hebrew text is accessed 9 April 2009 from <http://www.mechon-mamre.org/b/l/15204.htm>. See also L. GOLDSCHMIDT (ed.), *Der Babylonische Talmud* (Berlin 1935) *Menahot* 43b.

⁶ Lastly, it is attested in a few manuscripts from the Cairo Genizah fragment of the Palestinian order of service, dating from the ninth to fifteen centuries. The translations are mine, "Blessed are you, O God, Our Lord king of the universe who has made me a human being and not an animal, a man and not a woman (male and not a female), Israel and not a gentile, circumcised and not uncircumcised, a free person and not a slave". See J. MANN, "Genizah Fragments of the Palestinian Order of Service", *HUCA* 2 (1925) 277. MANN ("Genizah Fragments", 274, n. 19) also notes that the "Turin Mahzor" has these five antitheses, in slightly different form. In D.M. GOLDENBERG, "Scythian-Barbarian: The Permutations of a Classical Topos in Jewish and Christian Texts of Late Antiquity", *JJS* 49 (1998) 87-102, 100-101, n. 33, we find reference to

There are several points of similarities and differences between the three blessings of gratitude found in the *Tosefta*, in the Palestinian Talmud and in the Babylonian Talmud. In these different versions in which the three blessings of gratitude are cited, we find that the ideas expressed in the *Tosefta* are similar to those found in both the Palestinian and the Babylonian Talmud. All three rabbinic texts share structural and verbal similarities. They all emphasise that the blessings or sayings are obligatory. Each rabbinic text lists one member of a pair of opposite, and the other member is implied from the text. In addition, the terms גוי, אשה, and בור are repeated in all three texts. The major difference, however, is in the order in which the expressions appear. While in the *Tosefta* and in the Babylonian Talmud, we have the order גוי, אשה, and בור, in the Palestinian Talmud, by contrast, the last two blessings are presented in reversed order, גוי, בור, and אשה. The differences in the word order as found in the *Tosefta* and in the Talmuds need not be strongly emphasised. As scholars argue, synoptic comparison of rabbinic writings can only help to distinguish the different traditions behind specific rabbinic texts under study, their different schools, their periods of redaction, variations owing to editorial activities, the particular linguistic context of the rabbis as well as their redactional techniques⁷. It is

S. ASAF, *Sefer Dinaburg* (eds. Y. BAER – Y. GUTTMANN – M. SCHWABE) (Jerusalem 1949) 121, who noted a similar reading in another genizah text, manuscript Antonin, no. 993. N. WIEDER, "About the Blessings 'Goy – Slave – Woman', 'Brute', and 'Poor'", *Sinai* 85 (1979) 97-115, 106-109, also notes similar sayings in two other manuscripts, Montefiore, no. 214 and Parma, no. 67. The slight variations in the manuscripts are included in brackets. On issues concerning the content and dating of the fragments found in Cairo Genizah, see B.M. BOKSER, "An Annotated Bibliographical Guide to the Study of the Palestinian Talmud", *The Study of Ancient Judaism* (ed. J. NEUSNER) (Berlin 1981) 1-119, 21-25; J. TABORY, "The Benedictions of Self-Identity and the Changing Status of Women and of Orthodoxy", *Kenishta. Studies of the Synagogue World* (ed. J. TABORY) (Jerusalem 2001) I, 107-138, 109-115, points out the many variants of this Jewish prayer of thanksgiving. In addition, he noted that there is also an Iranian version. We shall limit our study to an analysis of the Jewish versions.

⁷ I. GAFNI, "The Modern Study of Rabbinics and Historical Questions: The Tale of the Text", *The New Testament and Rabbinic Literature* (eds.

only when one encounters two distinct writings that are radically different that one begins to ask questions about the historical situation behind the texts under study.

What is striking, however, is the significant difference between the blessing of gratitude found in early rabbinic writings and in the Genizah fragment. There is a closer parallel between the morning prayer of blessings found in the Cairo Genizah fragment and Gal 3,28 than between the blessings found in earlier Jewish writings and the related text found in the Cairo Genizah fragment. Thus, the question is whether or not the background of the blessings found in the Genizah fragments stems from a Christian usage of similar expressions, because it has closest parallels to the Pauline passages found in 1 Cor 12,13; Gal 3,28 and Col 3,11. Put in another way, do the suggestive parallels imply that there was Christian influence on Judaism in the later period? This discussion is in need of further research.

b) The three blessings in their socio-historical context

Turning now to the question of the social historical context in which the three blessings came into being and the social cultural world they envisage, our attempt to establish the context for understanding the use and function of the three blessings of gratitude found in rabbinic texts lies in understanding the history of Judaism in the rabbinic period⁸. The study of rabbinic Judaism, — the social, religious and political structures that shaped rabbinic texts, rabbinic culture as well as its relationships and interactions with other surrounding cultures — is a difficult task, as scholars readily acknowledge. And for the very specific question of the social-cultural world that the three blessings of

R. BIERINGER – F. GARCÍA MARTÍNEZ – D. POLLEFEYT – P.J. TOMSON) (JSJS 136; Leiden 2009) 43-61. See also S. SCHWARTZ, “The Political Geography of Rabbinic Texts”, *The Cambridge Companion to the Talmud and Rabbinic Literature* (ed. C.E. FONROBERT) (Cambridge, NY 2007) 75-96.

⁸ Here we will focus on the three blessings of gratitude as found in the *Tosefta*, in the Balylonian and in the Palestinian Talmud because they are the three texts that are compared with Gal 3,28 in the scholarly discussion of the text. The blessings of gratitude as found in the Genizah fragment are a later development, compared to the ancient sources under study.

gratitude found in rabbinic texts reflect, the discussion becomes even more difficult.

Concerning the three blessings of gratitude found in rabbinic texts, we are faced with the difficulties of understanding the *Sitz im Leben* as well as *Sitz in der Literatur* of the three sayings contained in each rabbinic text. Questions arise as to what are the social context and historical setting in which the three blessings may have been formed or used, either in its written or oral form? Or rather, what factors dictated the composition of the three blessing of gratitude found in rabbinic writings? Knowing that rabbinic texts were literature made and used by scholars, another question is whether the three blessings had any social function. Put in another way, since it is believed that the three blessings of gratitude found in rabbinic texts were used in a prayer setting, in the morning prayer of blessings, how much did this prayer influenced the daily life of the people? How might the relationship between a Jew and a Gentile, between a Jewish male and a Jewish female and between a wise Jew and an ignorant Jew be reconstructed on the basis of the three blessings of gratitude found in rabbinic texts? Owing to our limited access and knowledge of rabbinic Judaism, as well as the history of the Jews in that period, we will not be able to deal in detail with any of the questions posed above. We will make an attempt, judging from what the three blessings of gratitude presuppose and assert, as well as information from other sources, to see what we can be said about the historical context and uses of the three blessings in the framework of Judaism in antiquity. We shall present what we have understood as a minimum consensus in the research on the meaning of the three blessings of gratitude found in rabbinic texts.

The first concerns the origin of the three blessings of gratitude found in rabbinic writings. In tracing the origin of the blessings, we are faced with the difficulty that there is no direct evidence of such or similar expressions either in Scripture or in pre-rabbinic writings. But Meeks and some others have pointed out that the sayings were of Hellenistic origin, namely, that the three blessings of gratitude found in rabbinic texts reflect a similar formulation found in Greek writings, wherein a sage negatively expresses his gratitude for his status in a threefold formula: first, that he was born a human being and not one of the brutes; next that he was born a man and not a woman; thirdly a Greek and not a

Barbarian⁹. According to Meeks, the social reality behind the three blessings and expressions of gratitude found in both Greek and rabbinic writings is that of opposition and negative attitude toward one of the members of those paired realities. However, as Meeks argues, in antiquity this social reality had begun to decline in the Hellenistic world while it continued to exist within Judaism¹⁰. Examining some Jewish writings from antiquity, especially the works of Philo, Josephus and Eliezer ben Hyrcanus, Meeks opines that the Judaism in the Hellenistic era had a very negative view of women. In the Talmud, he argues, the view of women was not completely negative, there was the presence of few women in the rabbinic academies, but their involvement is not comparable to the involvement of women in the Stoic community¹¹.

Just as in our study of the problem of the alleged relationship between Gal 3,28 and the three expressions of gratitude found in Greek writings, we noted that the assumption of a possible influence of the latter on the former is highly questionable¹², so also in our study of the alleged relationship between three blessings of gratitude found in rabbinic writings and Gal 3,28, we are faced with similar problems. First, there are striking differences

⁹ MEEKS, "The Image of the Androgyne", 167-168, n. 8. See also D. KAUFMANN, "Das Alter der drei Benedictionen von Israel, vom Freien, und vom Mann", *MGWJ* 37 (1893) 14-18; KAHN, "Gentiles, Slaves and Women", 18-19. Here, we will be bringing in the result of our study of Gal 3,28 and the alleged relationship with the three expressions of gratitude found in Greek writings into our current discussion. To get a full grasp of the debate, however, see our article on Gal 3,28 and its alleged relationship to the three expressions of gratitude found in Greek writings.

¹⁰ MEEKS, "The Image of the Androgyne", 167-168, 174-179.

¹¹ The reference to women in the three blessings of gratitude found in rabbinic writings has given scholars an edge to reduce the three blessings of gratitude found in Jewish writings to debate on gender. The discussion has become more an issue on Jewish women in antiquity and less on the view of women, slaves and ignorant persons as referred to in the texts. We have already seen the evidence in the work of Meeks. There can be some justifications for this narrow approach to the three blessings of gratitude found in rabbinic writings. Nevertheless, our major objection is that when scholars narrowly focus on this text, they tend to read too much into the text, and overlook several other issues that need to be investigated.

¹² See our article on Gal 3,28 and its alleged relationship to the three expressions of gratitude found in Greek writings.

between the two sources in question. Second, the historical and social circumstances surrounding the origin of the three expressions of gratitude found in Greek texts and the three blessings of gratitude found in rabbinic literature are strikingly different. In our examination of the three expressions of gratitude found in Greek writings and their alleged relationship with Gal 3,28, we noted that there are two variant forms of the sayings (one of the sayings was attributed to Socrates and the other to Plato respectively) and our detailed comparison of these two sayings helped us in explaining the different emphasis of the sources, their function, meaning as well as their implications for understanding the view of women in antiquity. Compared with the three expressions of gratitude found in Greek texts, the three blessings of gratitude found in rabbinic writings have their independent historical, social and religious situations.

c) Relation between the Greek expressions of gratitude and the rabbinic blessings

Given the above observations, the question arises as to what kind of relationship the three expressions found in Greek writings share with the three blessings found in rabbinic literature? Or rather, how can the three expressions of gratitude found in Greek texts provide the original setting or the background of the three blessings of gratitude found in rabbinic literature?

In our view, there are two answers to these questions: the first is a possible influence of a cultural context. It may be considered that the structure and content of the three blessings of gratitude found in rabbinic writings were influenced by the widespread culture of the time, i.e., the tradition of using pairs of opposites to divide and identify realities. Or it could be the tradition of using three major pairs of opposites to view the human person from the perspective of what is perceived as good or bad. In our study of the three expressions of gratitude found in Greek writings, we noted that the idea of what is good or bad shaped the meaning of the three sayings attributed to Socrates and to Plato respectively. We also noted that in Gal 3,28 there were three pairs of opposites. But our view was that the way in which Paul employs the pairs of opposites found in Gal 3,28 is uniquely Pauline. Different structures of these alleged three pairs of opposites were found in 1

Cor 12,13 (cf. Col 3,11), which suggest the uniqueness and creativity of Paul, rather than the Hellenistic or (and) Jewish background some scholars have proposed. The three blessings of gratitude found in rabbinic texts could also be explained by the influence of Hellenistic culture, whether in the specific use of three pairs of opposites to describe every individual identity (race, gender and status), or in the general uses of pairs of opposites to divide and classify every reality. In addition to this cultural influence, the Jewish blessings are used in the rabbinic literature with a theological content deeply engraved in the theology of early rabbinic Judaism. It is clearly very different when we compare the three expressions of gratitude found in Greek writings with what we have in the alleged similar expressions found in rabbinic writings. The listing of only one member of each of the pairs and the inclusion of only the negative pair suggest a Jewish context for its interpretation.

The second alternative is that the use of the three blessings of gratitude found in rabbinic writings is uniquely rooted in the Jewish tradition of the rabbinic period under study. Here discussions focus on the social historical and religious contexts of early rabbinic liturgy. Scholars readily acknowledge that liturgical traditions of rabbinic Judaism emerged from several major influencing issues, among them the philosophical and theological ideologies concerning Jewish life and rituals, purity Laws, especially the categorization of cleanness and uncleanness. There are also social configurations and conventions that dominated the culture of the time, political realities of that time, especially internal conflicts. These aspects greatly shaped and influenced the cultural, literary and religious perspectives of rabbinic Judaism in the period from the first to third the centuries CE, and of course, the three blessings of gratitude found in rabbinic writings¹³. According to T. Zahavy, the rabbis' conception of "social stratification and division" and the role of religion in social relationships formed the bases for the composition of the three

¹³ Extensive discussions on the historical development of rabbinic Judaism could be found in R. BIERINGER – F. GARCÍA MARTÍNEZ – D. POLLEFEYT – P. J. TOMSON (eds.), *The New Testament and Rabbinic Literature* (JSJS 136; Leiden 2009); J. NEUSNER, *Judaism. The Evidence of the Mishnah* (Chicago, IL 1981) 14-22.

blessings of gratitude found in rabbinic sources¹⁴. In Judaism, the distinctions between Jew and Gentile, man and woman (not the least of them that women have low social status compared with men), and between free Jewish male and slave (the status of women and slave are the same) are self-evident and have their social and religious consequences. In the recitation of the three blessings, the person who recites the blessings admits his social status with the different religious practices that accompanies it.

The next step after having surveyed the possible origin of the three blessings of gratitude found in rabbinic writings is to determine their function and meaning. The three blessings of gratitude, as we know, are used in the context of Jewish morning liturgy. They are three brief fixed formulae recited at the beginning of the daily Jewish morning prayer of blessings. These three blessings are part of a series of blessings one recites as an expression of gratitude to God for the ability to wake up in the morning and be able to go about the daily routines of the morning¹⁵. Among the different blessings, such as thanking God for the ability to distinguish between day and night, the ability to wake up in the morning, and the ability to put on cloth, L. Hoffman acknowledges that the three blessings wherein a Jew thanks God for not having been created a Gentile, a woman and a slave (ignorant person) are somewhat different from the rest of the blessings¹⁶.

As for the purpose and function of the recitation of the three blessings, a rabbinic explanation is that a Jewish male thanks God that he is not a gentile because gentiles are excluded from fulfilling religious duties since “they are as nothing before Him”. He thanks God that he is not a woman because “a woman is under no obligation to keep the commandments. He thanks God that he is not an uneducated person “for no uneducated person fears sin”¹⁷.

¹⁴ T. ZAHAVY, *Studies in Jewish Prayer* (Lanham, MD 1990) 25.

¹⁵ L.A. HOFFMAN, “Blessings and Study: The Jewish Way to Begin a Day”, *My People’s Prayer Book*. (ed. L.A. HOFFMANN) (Woodstock, VT 2001) V, 6-16, 6-7.

¹⁶ HOFFMAN, “Blessings and Study”, 7.

¹⁷ A.L. WILLIAMS (trans.), *Tractate Berakoth (Benedictions), Mishna and Tosephta* (London 1921) 92-93.

From what we have seen so far, there can be no question as to whether or not the reason underlying the use of the three blessings of gratitude found in rabbinic writings is a religious one, i.e., the blessings articulate the responsibilities of a Jew in relation to keeping the Law. Nonetheless, the significance of the three blessings for the study of the view and attitude toward women in Judaism has been immense¹⁸.

Here, we cannot engage in a discussion of the question as to whether or not Judaism has a negative view and attitude toward women. A few points may be noted however. First, it appears that behind the three blessings of gratitude found in the rabbinic texts under study, we must suppose that certain views about the religious experience of the Jews in relation to fulfilling the Law are at work, views about their social and cultural lives as well as their specific values. How well and how deep the three blessings express those concerns is open to discussion. Suffice it to say that the rabbinic materials or rather the three blessings of gratitude as found in rabbinic writings are not enough, in and of themselves,

¹⁸ Jewish scholars, and in particular Jewish feminist scholars, have questioned the view that the three blessings of gratitude found in rabbinic sources express religious concerns. It is not a question of excluding the gentile, the woman and the slave from the obligation of the Law but of emphasising the priority of the male, they argue. It expresses Jewish (rabbinic) ideological convictions of gentiles, slaves and women as being radically 'other' and as a result they are denied full participation in almost (or all) religious and social aspects of Jewish life. See J.R. BASKIN, *Midrashic Women. Formations of the Feminine in Rabbinic Literature* (Hannover 2002) 13-42, 16-17; ILAN, "The Woman" 77-92, 77. As S. J. BERMAN, "The Status of Women in Halakhic Judaism," *Tradition. A Journal of Orthodox Thought* (1973) 5-28, esp. 8 argues: "the blessing recited by men each morning thanking God 'for not having made me a woman', is seen as simply symptomatic of a chauvinistic attitude toward women, intentionally cultivated by the religious system as a whole". GRUBER ("The Status", 151-153) for instance, points to the many passages in Hebrew Scripture that do allow women, together with men, to perform some religious duties, hold public roles and participate fully in some Jewish rites. With references to Exod 38,8, Jer 9,16-19, Judg 4,4-5 etc., he argues that the treatment of women in Judaism is more due to the worldview of rabbinic Judaism than to Scripture itself, even though in the latter this negative worldview about women is not completely absent. See also J. NEUSNER (trans.), *Tractate Menahot*. Chapters 4-7 (The Talmud of Babylonia: An American Translation 29/B; Atlanta, GA 1991) 30.

historical criteria or evidence to determine the representation of women in ancient Judaism or rabbinic Judaism.

As Ross Kramer puts it, rabbinic writings contain “multiple voices” with variety of topics shaped by the interaction with the different social, cultural and religious worlds of ancient society¹⁹. With these concerns, she argues, an opinion cannot be taken as conclusive evidence for the reconstruction of the attitude toward women or the kind of social practice in the rabbinic period. The implication is that although rabbinic texts are of interest for what they may reveal about the situation of women in antiquity, these ancient sources must be dealt with critically.

Second, part of the difficulty in the discussion of the function and meaning of the three blessings of gratitude found in rabbinic texts has to do with the structure of those blessings. Compared to the three expressions of gratitude found in Greek writings or the three pairs of opposites found in Gal 3,28, the three blessings of gratitude found in the *Tosefta* and in the Talmuds omit the first member of each of the pairs of opposites listed in the blessings. The omissions or rather the exclusive pattern of the three blessings of gratitude found in rabbinic writings is an important indicator one may wish to use to argue that the form of the three blessings is uniquely Jewish and only really make sense from a context relating to Judaism. In context, scholars have sought to use the omissions or rather the form of the blessings to express underlying ideas concerning the use of the term קדש (*qadosh*) in Jewish tradition. To the extent that the three blessings of gratitude found in rabbinic sources have been used in a religious context and are given religious meanings, scholars are of the view that the omission of one of the members of each of the pairs listed in the blessings is likely due to how the term קדש functions in Judaism²⁰.

¹⁹ R.S. KRAEMER, “Jewish Women and Christian Origins”, *Women and Christian Origins* (eds. R.S. KRAEMER – M.R. D’ANGELO) (New York 1999) 37.

²⁰ S. ZUCROW, *Women, Slaves and the Ignorant in Rabbinic Literature, and Also the Dignity of Man* (Clark, NJ 2008) 80. According to T.D. SETEL, “Roundtable Discussion: Feminist Reflections on Separation and Unity in Jewish Theology”, *JFSR* 1 (1985) 113-118, 114, the Jewish concept of “holiness as separation” bears strongly on the way “role relationship plays in the tradition and, conversely, the extent to which Judaism incorporates patriarchal modes of thought in the form of dualistic separations”. BDB, 871-874, lists a wide range of meanings for the Hebrew word קדש and its cognates. It includes apartness,

With regard to purity issues, the domestic, social, and religious relationships between a Jew and a Gentile, a Jewish male and a Jewish female, and between a Jewish free born and a Jewish slave (ignorant person), are very much in check. From the point of view of holiness, a Jewish man stands higher above a Gentile, a Jewish woman and a Jewish slave. In the context of fulfilling the Law, a Jewish male considers himself sacred; he is set apart and should not be defiled by the “other, the polluted, the unholy”²¹. If the other is indeed a “radically separable and separate entity”²² as questioned by Jonathan Boyarin and if “separation in fact cannot ultimately tolerate difference”²³ as suggested by Keller, then a Jewish male is bound to keep his distance from those who are considered the “other” in order to keep his soul divine and pure.

Our third and final observation concerns the question of how rabbinic Judaism reflects Jewish traditions and heritage after the second Temple period, and how such traditions and heritage are further defined and expressed in statements like the three blessings of gratitude found in rabbinic sources. As already hinted above, the use of rabbinic tradition for understanding second Temple Judaism or rabbinic Judaism is certainly not easy. Given the problem of *Sitz im Leben* and *Sitz im Literatur* of rabbinic materials, we cannot adequately decide the extent to which the three blessings of gratitude found in rabbinic texts relate to the system of thought, religious and social practices of Judaism of the Second Temple period or of rabbinic Judaism. In addition, there is the problem of identifying the origin of the three blessings of gratitude found in rabbinic sources. Although scholars attempted to read the three blessings against the background of the three expressions of gratitude attributed to Socrates and Plato respectively, we have

sacredness of places, persons or things consecrated and set apart as sacred by God's presence or contact with sacred places. It also includes the holiness of God, of his divine activity, of his name as sacred, inviolable and separate from all defilement. BDB also mentions that the original idea behind this word קדש is that of separation or withdrawal.

²¹ C. KELLER, “Roundtable Discussion: Feminist Reflections on Separation and Unity in Jewish Theology”, *JFSR* 1 (1985) 118-121, 120.

²² J. BOYARIN, “The Other within and the Other Without”, *The Other in Jewish Thought and History*. Constructions of Jewish Culture and Identity (eds. L.J. SILBERSTEIN – R.L. COHN) (New York 1995) 424-452, 424.

²³ KELLER, “Roundtable”, 120.

seen that there are many irreconcilable differences that call for independent sources and background. Due to the absence of the three blessings of gratitude in the scripture and in pre-rabbinic writings, the special question to be considered is whether the three expressions can be otherwise explained as rabbinic's articulation of the religious, social and cultural situation of their time. But how well these expressions could be simply windows into the social cultural and religious practices of Judaism in the Second Temple period and how well the expressions mark out and define the identity of those mentioned are of course difficult questions.

2. A comparative assessment of Gal 3,28 and the three blessings of gratitude found in rabbinic texts

As far as the question of the relationship between Gal 3,28 and the three blessings of gratitude found in rabbinic writings is concerned, the debate has thus far been limited to only one approach. Comparing the literary features of Gal 3,28 and the three blessings of gratitude found in rabbinic writings, scholars opine that there is a certain degree of influence of the three blessings of gratitude found in rabbinic texts on Gal 3,28. A recurring argument in the debate is that both Gal 3,28 and the three blessings of gratitude found in rabbinic writings use similar terms and that Gal 3,28 is possibly a response to what the content of the latter implies. Although the above presupposition has been endorsed by several scholars without question, there is a need to return to the argument with new insights and questions. We will first address the difficulties associated with the proposal that there is a possible link between Gal 3,28 and the three blessings of gratitude found in rabbinic writings. From the result of our assessment, a modified view will be proposed, namely that Gal 3,28 is related to the three blessings of gratitude found in rabbinic sources only on the basis of shared assumptions. Given that earlier in this work we have compared the literary structures of the three blessings of gratitude as represented in rabbinic writings, we will not provide a further detailed comparative analysis of these rabbinic sources with Gal 3,28. Our primary purpose here is to briefly compare the theological and literary features of Gal 3,28 with these rabbinic texts in question.

a) Direct Connection

It is difficult to argue that there is a connection, literary or thematic, between Gal 3,28 and the three expressions of gratitude found in rabbinic texts, since by issue of structure, theological theme, as well as historical context, these two traditions differ substantially.

Starting with the issue of chronology, we have seen that the *Tosefta* and the Talmuds all postdate Galatians. The later dating of these Jewish texts calls into question how Gal 3,28 could possibly reflect the three blessings of gratitude found in rabbinic texts, when in actual fact these Jewish texts all postdate Galatians by several centuries. The question which might be worth considering is whether Paul may have had access to the *Vorlage* of the three blessings of gratitude found in rabbinic sources. In this case there may have existed a source, written or oral, that accounts for the formula in Gal 3,28 and was later incorporated into the rabbinic writings under study. Since we have very little knowledge of Judaism in the first century and of other ancient writings that may have been available to Paul, we cannot offer an adequate answer to this question. Nevertheless, it is very much unlikely to suggest that there is a direct connection between Gal 3,28 and the three blessings of gratitude found in rabbinic writings given the fact that there is no direct or indirect evidence of the three blessings of gratitude in pre-rabbinic writings.

In addition, the question of the extent of continuity and discontinuity between Judaism before and Judaism after the destruction of the Second Temple in 70 CE has been a complex one. There has been debate about what exactly remained, what changed and what was replaced in Jewish tradition after the destruction of the Temple in 70 CE. Also debated is the question of to what extent have the interactive influence of Hellenistic and Christian traditions shaped rabbinic Judaism and what was creatively unique of rabbinic Judaism²⁴. These, of course, are

²⁴ For scholarly discussions on these issues, see B. GERHARDSSON, *Memory and Manuscript. Oral Tradition and Written Transmission in Rabbinic Judaism and Early Christianity with Tradition and Transmission in Early Christianity* (Grand Rapids, MI 1998). See also H. WANSBROUGH (ed.), *Jesus and the Oral Gospel Tradition* (JSNTSS 64; Sheffield 1991). In this collection of essays, we find scholarly contributions to questions concerning the evolution of ancient traditions: from oral traditions to written traditions of the Old Testament,

issues that must be dealt with before any assertion can be made as to the relationship between Gal 3,28 and the three blessings of gratitude found in rabbinic texts.

From a literary perspective, Gal 3,28 differs from the overall structure of the three blessings of gratitude found in the *Tosefta* and in the Talmuds by the following omissions and re-arrangements. Both Gal 3,28 and the three expressions of gratitude found in rabbinic writings make three statements, however, the content of the two traditions are so different from each other. Gal 3,28 contains three pairs of antitheses, while the rabbinic texts under study mention only one member of each of the pairs of opposites listed in the texts. Instead of the pairs Ἰουδαῖος and Ἑλλήν, δοῦλος, and ἐλεύθερος, ἄρσεν and θήλυ, as in Gal 3,28, we have גוי, אשה and בור. In these lists of items, we find only one closely related term, as גוי could have a similar connotation as Ἑλλήν²⁵. In the second expression, the terms אשה and θήλυ have different connotations, but sometimes אשה could be used in a general sense to identify every female human²⁶. The use of בור in the third expression is unique to the three blessings of gratitude. The negative particles used in Gal 3,28 and the three expressions of gratitude found in rabbinic sources differ: In Gal 3,28, the first two pairs have two negative particles οὐ - οὐδὲ and the third pair has only one negative particle οὐ, to which the opposite is joined by καὶ. Unlike Gal 3,28, each statement in the three blessings of gratitude found in rabbinic sources contains the negative particle שלא.

Judaism of the Second Temple period, rabbinic Judaism and the New Testament, especially the gospels. Their discussions centre on the different traditions that preceded the written Gospels and the possible interrelations between them. Others have focused on several aspects of the relationship between Judaism before and after Second Temple period, especially Judaism as represented in rabbinic period. See also D.I. BREWER, "The Use of Rabbinic Sources in Gospel Studies", *TynB* 50 (1999) 281-298, 282.

²⁵ BDB, 156, translates גוי as nation, people (New Hebrew includes gentiles). The LXX often translates the Hebrew גוי as ἔθνος. See J. LUST – E. EYNIKEL – K. HAUSPIE (eds.), *A Greek-English Lexicon of the Septuagint* (Stuttgart 2003) 172. In some English lexicons of the New Testament Ἑλλήν is used to refer to non-Jews. Where גוי has been used in the sense of those who are non-Jews defined in terms of nation, ethnicity, culture and religion, with respect to what Ἑλλήν may have meant for Paul, one may conclude that both terms have similar meaning.

²⁶ BDB, 61; BDAG, 455.

On the level of context, we suggest that Gal 3,28 and the three blessings of gratitude found in rabbinic writings have different social cultural, historical and literary contexts within which they belong. While Gal 3,28 could be interpreted within the framework of Paul's response to the Galatian crisis, the three blessings of gratitude found in rabbinic texts, as we have seen above, are used in a liturgical context. We know that these blessings have a social, political, religious and cultural world that they evoke. But how well these worlds could be credibly reconstructed from the rabbinic writings wherein they are contained remains a question.

Our recognition of the fundamental differences between Gal 3,28 and the three blessings of gratitude found in rabbinic texts, here, elicit comments. First, the purpose the terms Ἰουδαῖος and Ἑλλήν, δοῦλος, and ἐλεύθερος, ἄρσεν, and θῆλυ serve in Gal 3,28 are completely different from the purpose the terms גוי, אשה, and בור serve in the three blessings of gratitude found in rabbinic texts. Second, what Gal 3,28 has in common with the three blessings of gratitude found in rabbinic writings is so slim to suggest that the structure of the latter is possibly influenced by the former. Third, the presence of similar words or three expressions in both Gal 3,28 and the three blessings of gratitude found in rabbinic sources does not *ipso facto* constitute evidence that the former is possibly dependent on the latter. Moreover, the pairs of opposites found in Gal 3,28 and the terms found in the three blessings of gratitude are not uniquely Pauline or rabbinic, they are expressions used within the social setting and cultural context of the Greco-Roman world. Thus, although Paul or the rabbis are using words inherent in the context of their time, they are giving those words different meanings to that which similar usages in Greek texts imply. Perhaps, one can summarize the discussion by suggesting that we cannot cite the presence of parallels to argue that Gal 3,28 is derived from Paul's Jewish background, and in particular from those rabbinic texts under debate. Our response is: to look for parallels in order to explain the meaning of Gal 3,28 is a methodological assumption that ends up distorting the meaning of Gal 3,28 in its immediate and wider literary context.

In the next section, we are going to propose what the similar antithetical sayings found in Gal 3,28 and the three blessings of gratitude found in rabbinic writings inform us about the wider social cultural contexts wherein these texts under study come from.

b) Common tradition or shared assumption

Against the background of the historical, religious and social observations we made concerning Gal 3,28, the three blessings of gratitude found in rabbinic texts, and the three expressions of gratitude found in Greek texts, our view is that the direct or implied uses of pairs of opposites in these passages reveal dependence on a common tradition and the interaction of the different cultures with the larger Greco-Roman world of the time. This common tradition stretches back to the early Greco-Roman world and even earlier.

It is generally agreed upon that the uses of relationships of opposites are by nature inherent in the social organizations of every society²⁷. It is a system rooted in every human society that comes to expression in either a very negative or positive way, and clearly defines the way in which relationships, religious organizations, political and social structures, household and every other existing reality are arranged²⁸. Its usage varies slightly from every culture and society depending on the social cultural values, symbols and biases guiding the society in question, as well as how religion is conceived and expressed²⁹. In the context of ancient Greek society, for instance, Lloyd argues that the pairs right and left, male and female, and light and darkness were most symbolic and were imbued with religious meanings, usually associated as they are with either negative or positive evaluation of the items in the list³⁰.

²⁷ Space does not allow us to cover this issue here. For further details, see R.W. BULLIET – P.K. CROSSLEY – D.R. HEADRICK, *The Earth and Its Peoples. A Global History* (Boston, MA 2001); V. HARLE, *Ideas of Social Order in the Ancient World* (Westport, CT 1998).

²⁸ See T. ILAN, "The Woman as 'Other' in Rabbinic Literature", *Jewish Identity in the Greco-Roman World* (eds. J. FREY – D.R. SCHWARTZ – S. GRIPENTROG) (AGJU 71; Leiden 2007).

²⁹ See G.E.R. LLOYD, *Methods and Problems in Greek Science* (Cambridge 1991) 38-39; LLOYD, *Polarity and Analogy*, 90. See also L.J. MARTYN, "The Apocalyptic Gospel in Galatians", *Interpretation* 54 (2000) 246-266, 256; MEEKS, "The Image of the Androgyne", 166.

³⁰ See LLOYD, *Polarity and Analogy*, 42-47. See also N.M. SAMUELSON, *Judaism and the Doctrine of Creation* (Cambridge 2007) 196.

In Jewish tradition, uses of pairs of opposites are of two kinds: the one to express how creation is ordered³¹, and the other to emphasise and reinforce hierarchical or discriminatory distinctions between various pairs of opposites. For the latter, it is commonly assumed that Greek thoughts, Jewish religious traditions, and Jewish history in the first centuries have enormous influence on the oppositional or discriminatory uses of pairs of opposites found in Jewish writings³². One example is the use of the pair Judean/Jew and Gentile, which according to James Dunn emerged as a result of the need to create a distinctive national and religious identity in opposition to the Hellenistic policy “intended to obliterate national and religious distinctiveness”³³. The pair male and female is a common division, but the extent to which the differences between these two realities should or should not be emphasised is a much debated question in Judaism.

The foregoing discussion describes the context of the Greco-Roman society in which Paul lived and worked. Paul was very much familiar with the basic distinctions used in his society, as well as their influences and consequences on the social realities of his day. For different purposes and especially for the message of his gospel, he employs a range of binary terms such as Jew and Greek, male and female, slave and free, flesh and Spirit, honour and shame, light and darkness. The antitheses Jew and Greek, slave and free, and male and female (i.e., the pairs used in Gal 3,28) appear in several of Paul’s writings including Romans, 1 Corinthians and Galatians. At one time, Paul simply shares the opposing ideas associated with those pairs (see, for instance 1 Cor 1,22-23; Gal 2,14-15; Rom 1,16, for the pair Jew and Greek, 1 Cor 7,21, Gal 4,21-31 for the pair slave and free, see also Rom 1,26 where the cognate of ἄρσεν and θήλυ are used). At other times he critiques and alters their original content and intent (see, for instance 1 Cor 1,24; 12,13; Gal 3,2; Rom 3,9.29; 9,24. Cf. Col 3,11

³¹ See, for instance, the origin of creation in Genesis 1 and 2, and Sir 33,7-14, 15; 42,24.

³² For an in-depth survey on the issue, see the scholarly contributions in J. NEUSNER – A.J. AVERY-PECK (eds.), *Judaism in Late Antiquity* (Leiden 1999) III/2.

³³ J. DUNN, “Was Judaism Particularist or Universalist?”, *Judaism in Late Antiquity*, III/2, 57-76, 61, 62.

for the pair Jew and Greek; Gal 3,28 for the pair male and female; 1 Cor 7,22. Cf. Col 3,11 for the pair slave and free)³⁴. Note also that in Paul's letters the terms Jew, Greek, slave, free, male and female, are not always associated as pairs. In several places, they occur as single words and their usages in context vary depending on the nature of the situation they address.

Apart from his use of certain words as antithetical pairs, Paul's uses of the pairs Jew and Greek, slave and free, and male and female differ yet in another respect from their usages in Judaism and in the Greco-Roman society of his time. Motivated by Paul's gospel of the unity and oneness of all believers in Christ, Paul shows himself as an example of one who could accommodate everyone, see 1 Cor 9,19-23. In 1 Cor 9,19 he characterizes himself as a slave and a free person, and in 2 Cor 4,5, he designates himself as a slave of Christ. In Gal 4,19 Paul compares himself to a mother having birth pangs (see also 1 Thess 2,7 where speaks of himself as a nurse), and in 1 Thess 2,11 he describes himself as a father (see also 1 Cor 4,15; Phil 2,22; Phlm 10).

These different applications or uses of pairs of opposites in Paul's letters raise serious questions, not only for Paul's use of sources in general, but also for how we should address the relationship between Gal 3,28 and the three blessings of gratitude found in rabbinic texts. It is true that the uses of pairs of opposites in antiquity have their origin in Hellenistic thoughts and traditions, and were adopted by both Jews and Christians, nonetheless, the specific use of the pair Jew and Greek in Gal 3,28 and its implied usages in the three blessings of gratitude found in rabbinic texts is relative to Jewish thought and experience. Considering the historical occasion or situational background of Galatians³⁵, we

³⁴ See the collections of essays in *Paul in the Greco-Roman World. A Handbook* (ed. J.P. SAMPLEY) (Harrisburg, PA 2003). See also L.J. MARTYN, "Apocalyptic Antinomies in Paul's Letter to the Galatians", *NTS* 31 (1985) 410-424; T. RAJAK, "The Location of Cultures in Second Temple Palestine: The Evidence of Josephus", *The Book of Acts in Its Palestinian Setting* (ed. R. BAUCKHAM) (Grand Rapids, MI 1994) IV, 1-14.

³⁵ Here, we cannot engage in a discussion of the theme of Galatians. A good many studies have been done on this topic and several theological issues have been raised. For most recent study that gives an extensive bibliographical details about the history of the research, see J. RICHES, *Galatians through the Centuries* (Oxford 2008). For our present purpose, it suffices to say that

suggest that Paul's uses of the expressions in Gal 3,28 is influenced by how the pairs are used in Judaism and among Jewish Christians, both of which sought to emphasise the differences between Jew and Greek, slave and free, and between male and female on the basis of the Law.

P. Tomson's suggestion that in Gal 3,28 Paul is influenced by his Halakhic background, could shed light on the question of the relationship between Gal 3,28 and the three blessings of gratitude found in rabbinic sources³⁶. In his *Paul and the Jewish Law: Halakha in the Letters of the Apostle to the Gentiles*, Tomson emphasises that Paul's understanding of halakha influenced his position on how the Jews are distinct from the Gentiles³⁷. According to Tomson, Paul accepted distinctions in the social reality between Jews and Gentiles (non-Jews), but in the context of his gospel to the Gentiles, "the phrase that 'in Christ is neither Jew nor Greek' would mean that such differences as he does recognizes between Jew and non-Jews *are not soteriologically relevant*, for, as his other phrase goes, neither Jew nor Greek are 'justified (or saved) by works of the Law'"³⁸.

For our present discussion, Tomson's approach to Gal 3,28 offers some interesting clues and raises some questions. Given his argument on how Gal 3,28 is influenced by Paul's Jewish origin, one may wish, for example, to investigate the issue of the relationship between

Galatians is an occasional letter. It was written in response to the question of whether and how Gentiles can obtain equal participation in the promise, blessings and heirship of Abraham. The Judaizers have arrived in Galatians and preached the gospel that Gentile converts to Christianity should conform to the normal procedure prescribed for proselytes — circumcision and commitment to Israel's Torah in order to obtain full membership in the heirship of Abraham. Against this teaching, Paul argues that in Christ there is no distinction between Jew and Greek, slave and free, male and female, all believers are heirs of Abraham, members of God's people and recipients of his promises. See J.M.G. BARCLAY, *Obeying the Truth. A Study of Paul's Ethics in Galatians* (ed. J. RICHES) (SNTW; Edinburgh 1988) 54-55.

³⁶ P. TOMSON, *Paul and the Jewish Law. Halakha in the Letters of the Apostle to the Gentiles* (Assen 1990). See also his recent article: P.J. TOMSON, "Halakah in the New Testament: A Research Overview", *The New Testament and Rabbinic Literature* (eds. R. BIERINGER – F. GARCÍA MARTÍNEZ – D. POLLEFEYT – P. TOMSON) (JSJSup; Leiden 2010) 135-206.

³⁷ TOMSON, "Halakah", 141-142.

³⁸ TOMSON, "Halakah", 168.

Gal 3,28 and the three blessings of gratitude found in rabbinic texts. Tomson's identification of the contrast between Ἰουδαῖος and Ἕλληνας as distinctions created by halakhah (the Law) is essentially important for reading texts like Gal 3,28 and the three blessings of gratitude where pairs of opposites are used. Assuming that the idea of the use of distinctions goes back to Judaism as he argues, and Gal 3,28 and the three blessings of gratitude contain pairs of opposites, then our view is that both Gal 3,28 and the three blessings of gratitude found in rabbinic text share a common background. Here there is no literary or direct connection between the passages in question but that both passages draw from a common tradition, and each text has a different historical background that accounts for the respective variable uses of pairs of opposites.

Although Tomson's interpretation of Gal 3,28a from the point of view of Paul's Jewish background has partially provided a context in which we can situate the relationship between Gal 3,28 and the three blessings of gratitude found in rabbinic texts, entirely missing in his presentation is any discussion about why Paul chooses and uses the remaining distinctions or pairs of opposites listed in Gal 3,28. The question is, Why does Tomson elaborate only on the contrast between Ἰουδαῖος and Ἕλληνας, and leaves out the contrasts between δοῦλος and ἐλεύθερος and between ἄρσεν and θῆλυ? Is it that the pairs δοῦλος and ἐλεύθερος and ἄρσεν and θῆλυ are not important for Paul, even though they have been used in the context? Or that halakhah does not recognize the distinctions between δοῦλος and ἐλεύθερος and between ἄρσεν and θῆλυ? Certainly not, for as the three blessings of gratitude make clear, the terms slave, free, male and female are fundamental categories of identity for Jews.

On the basis of our observations above, our explanation for the similar terms found in both Gal 3,28 and in the three blessings of gratitude found in rabbinic texts is that both passages share a common language and concept. Gal 3,28 and the three blessings of gratitude found in rabbinic texts were influenced by the antithetical uses of pairs of opposites and the social cultural construction of differences present in the ancient Greco-Roman society. Nevertheless, they are independent texts with independent backgrounds. The different applications and adaptability of the pairs Jew and Greek, male and female, slave and free explain the background of each of the texts. Each text answers a different question, and this

explains why Gal 3,28, the three blessings of gratitude found in rabbinic texts and the three expressions of gratitude found in Greek texts, differ in form so greatly from each other.

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A careful comparison of the structures, contents and emphases of Gal 3,28 with the three blessings of gratitude found in rabbinic texts was strikingly revealing, not only about the differences between these Jewish and Christian texts, but also about the question of how Gal 3,28 is related to the three blessings of gratitude found in rabbinic texts. We have demonstrated in this study that the occurrences of the three pairs of opposites in Gal 3,28 and their implied usages in the three blessings of gratitude found in rabbinic sources are not enough reason to suggest that there is an influence of the latter on the former or that there is a direct relationship between the expressions found in the two traditions under study.

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SUMMARY

Scholars have suggested that Gal 3,28 is comparable to similar sayings found in rabbinic writings, and that the latter can help in interpreting and understanding the meaning and theology of Gal 3,28. In this study we have analysed and compared the alleged similar sayings found in Jewish texts and Gal 3,28 in order to demonstrate that Gal 3,28 is neither literally nor thematically related to the former, and we should not allow the alleged similar sayings found in rabbinic writings to influence our reading of Gal 3,28. Both texts reflect the conceptual uses of pairs of opposites in the Greco-Roman tradition, but at the same time, their subsequent usages or occurrences in Jewish and Christian texts came into being independently from one another.

Between Ambition and Quietism: the Socio-political Background of 1 Thessalonians 4,9-12

Scholars have made several attempts to determine the social status of the Thessalonian Christian community. However it is evident from ongoing discussion that consensus has not been reached on the character of this small group (were they mostly Jews¹ or Gentiles²? were they urban poor³ or “not necessarily poor artisan workers”⁴? were they well acquainted with Hellenistic Jewish philosophy⁵ or more exposed to the philosophical reflections of Greek moralists?⁶). There is also disagreement regarding the nature of Paul’s advices to his fellow believers in Thessalonica: some imagine Paul to be worried by the Christian Thessalonians, by then idle people waiting for the imminent *parousia*⁷, or at least a community in which some idle members made a nuisance of themselves by exploiting the brotherly love of their fellow Christians⁸. Others, taking a cue from Paul’s *parenthesis* and instructions, think more of a persecuted church⁹, or of a charismatic

¹ G. MILLIGAN, *St. Paul’s Epistles to the Thessalonians*. The Greek Text with Introduction and Notes (London 1908) 54-55.

² A.J. MALHERBE, *The Letters to the Thessalonians*. A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary (AB32b; New York 2000) 62-65; R.S. ASCOUGH, “The Thessalonian Christian Community as a Professional Voluntary Association”, *JBL* 119 (2000) 312-313.

³ R.F. HOCK, *The Social Context of Paul’s Ministry*. Tentmaking and Apostleship (Philadelphia, PA 1980) 44-45.

⁴ MALHERBE, *The Letters*, 65.

⁵ C.J. ROETZEL, “Theodidaktoi and Handwork in Philo and I Thessalonians”, *L’Apôtre Paul: personnalité, style et conception du ministère* (ed. A. VANHOYE) (BETL 73; Leuven 1986) 327.

⁶ HOCK, *The Social Context*, 44-45; E.J. RICHARD, *First and Second Thessalonians* (Sacra Pagina 11; Collegeville, PA 1995) 219-220.

⁷ B. RIGAUX, *Les épîtres aux Thessaloniens* (EB; Paris 1956) 519-521; Roetzel, “Theodidaktoi”, 324-331.

⁸ C.R. NICHOLL, *From Hope to Despair in Thessalonica*. Situating 1 and 2 Thessalonians (SNTS 126; Cambridge 2004) 104.

⁹ C.A. WANAMAKER, *The Epistles to the Thessalonians: A commentary on the Greek Text* (NIGTC; Grand Rapids, MI 1990) 164.

community who risked being perceived as populated by possessed/insane adepts¹⁰, or even of a congregation afflicted by the “welfare syndrome”, to which Paul showed how to live independently to free them from the client-patron relationship¹¹. I propose that the embarrassing number of scholarly reconstructions might be overcome by seriously considering two factors. On the one hand the possibility that the Thessalonian Christian community could have been structured (and perceived) as a professional voluntary association of hand-workers. On the other hand Paul’s injunctions to the Thessalonians were motivated by the urgency to provide a practical advice to assure the community survival rather than being situated on the grounds of philosophical reflection.

This study is organized as follows. Assuming the Christian group of Thessalonica to be similar to a professional voluntary association of manual workers — like many others in the contemporary Roman Empire — I will attempt to reconstruct the socio-political context of first century Thessalonica by gathering relevant information on the status of the voluntary associations¹² and of the Cult of the Emperor in the Eastern provinces of the Empire, showing how the adoption of an exclusive cult and the consequent rejection of the Imperial Cult put the Christian Thessalonians at odds with their fellow city dwellers and their potential Roman patrons. I then examine the possibility that the reformation initiated by the Empire in the administration of the Eastern Provinces

¹⁰ W.A. MEEKS, *The First Urban Christians. The Social World of the Apostle Paul* (New Haven – London 1983) 106.

¹¹ B.W. WINTER, “‘If a Man Does not Wish to Work...’ A Cultural and Historical Setting for 2 Thessalonians 3:6-16”, *TynBul* 40 (1989) 303-315. Winter recognizes that “those who laboured with their hands certainly did not command the respect of the well-to-do outsiders”. But he thinks that it is possible “that the outsiders to whom Paul refers had been patrons of some of the Christians. A client had a financial source to call upon for his daily food. If on the other hand, he makes no further claims on his patron would he not earn the respect of his patron?” (312). This could be possible, but it seems to go against Saller’s statement, endorsed by Winter himself (305), that “[...] a man’s social status was reflected in the size of his following — a large clientèle symbolizing his power to give inferiors what they needed [...]” — R.P. SALLER, *Patronage under the Early Empire* (Cambridge 1982) 205. If this is true, then how much happier would be a wealthy citizen to lose a number of clients?

¹² See ASCOUGH, “The Thessalonian”, 316 for a concise description of the two primary types of associations (religious and professional).

encouraged lower-class workers to challenge the local Greek oligarchies' power, making the Christians in Thessalonica a disdained if not suspect association in the eyes of wealthy Greek authorities. I conclude by presenting results from my historical survey and arguing that the expression "strive to keep quiet" (1 Thess 4,11) has a political connotation and is better understood as practical advice motivated by a definite socio-historical situation rather than a philosophically or even theologically determined stance. Paul, concerned about how the civic authorities would perceive an association converted to an exclusive cult, delivered precise counsel to become invisible and independent, to remain unnoticed, and to give up any progressive socio-political aspirations, even if that meant disqualifying themselves from actively participating in the redistribution of the benefits and goods of urban society.

1. *The Hazards of Being a Voluntary Association in Thessalonica*

Richard Ascough's thesis about the social location and organizational structure of the ἐκκλησία Θεσσαλονικέων deserves attention¹³. Acts 17,1-4 describes a community comprising by Jews and (mainly) God-fearers, since Paul met them in the synagogue. However, there is internal evidence in 1 Thessalonians that point to a very different picture (cf. 1 Thess 1,9). Focusing on epigraphic evidence, Ascough argues that the Christian group in Thessalonica was very similar to a professional voluntary association (even suggesting a guild of tentmakers or leatherworkers)¹⁴. Paul would have used his trade "to share his gospel message with fellow workers and customers"¹⁵, people from

¹³ R.S. ASCOUGH, "Voluntary Associations and Community Formation: Paul's Macedonian Christian Communities in Context" (PhD Thesis; Toronto 1997); id., "The Thessalonian"; id., *Paul's Macedonian Associations. The Social Context of 1 Thessalonians and Philippians* (WUNT II/161; Tübingen 2003); id., "Voluntary Associations and the Formation of Pauline Churches: Addressing the Objections", *Vereine, Synagogen und Gemeinden im kaiserzeitlichen Kleinasien* (eds. A. GUTSFELD – D.A. KOCH) (STAC 25; Tübingen 2006) 149-183.

¹⁴ ASCOUGH, "The Thessalonian", 324.

¹⁵ ASCOUGH, "The Thessalonian", 317. See for ex. *IG* 10/2, 291 and *SIG*³ 1140. On the stigma attached to trades see Plutarch, *Per.* I.4-II.1, 2: "...while

the lower ranks of society, some of whom were probably “already involved in some form of voluntary association”¹⁶. Since Paul’s advice to this specific group is to keep a low profile and respect the order of things (1 Thess 5,14) so as to avoid any unnecessary publicity and possible hostility, an ulterior look at the “very real danger in belonging to an unrecognized society during the imperial period” may be required¹⁷. As Cotter suggested, there is a need to properly weigh “the clear evidence of Roman prohibition of such societies and the constant threat of their sudden investigation and dissolution”¹⁸.

During the Roman Empire, Macedonia maintained its strong Greek character (cf. Livy 31.29)¹⁹. Thessalonica had been its capital since 146 BCE. In Paul’s day, in addition to her Greek heritage, the city of Thessalonica had a strong Roman presence and influence²⁰. Thessalonica was already well-known for its role during the civil wars that burst out in the first century BCE for the control of the Republic and, later, the Empire. Pompey established its headquarters in the city in 48 BCE. A few years later, when Julius Caesar was murdered (44 BCE), Thessalonica supported Brutus and Cassius. In neither case did the Macedonian city make a far-sighted choice. To be sure, the Thessalonians were wise and

we delight in the work [of craftsmen and artisans], we despise the workman...it does not necessarily follow that, if the work delights you with its graces, the one who wrought it is worthy of your esteem”, quoted by WINTER, “If a Man”, 304; see also HOCK, *The Social Context*, 35-36.

¹⁶ ASCOUGH, “The Thessalonian”, 315.

¹⁷ W. COTTER, “The Collegia and Roman Law. State restrictions on voluntary associations, 64 BCE – 200 CE”, *Voluntary Associations in the Graeco-Roman World* (eds. J.S. KLOPPENBORG — S.G. WILSON) (London and New York 1996) 88.

¹⁸ COTTER, “The Collegia”, 88. See also I. ARNAOUTOGLU, “Roman Law and *Collegia* in Asia Minor”, *RIDA* 49 (3e série; 2002) 27-44, who shows that the application of restrictions against associations was highly selective and very local.

¹⁹ For a description of Macedonia during the Roman Empire see: M.B. COSMOPOULOS, *Macedonia. An Introduction to its Political History* (Winnipeg 1992) 49-51: “Macedonians in the Roman period had a strong Greek conscience, spoke Greek, and were considered Greeks by the Roman administration” (51). On the administration of the Eastern cities during the first century see R. MACMULLEN, *Enemies of the Roman Order*. Treason, Unrest, and Alienation in the Empire (Cambridge, MA 1966) 165-168.

²⁰ H.L. HENDRIX, “Thessalonica”, *ABD* 6, 523-527.

quick enough to redirect their support to Octavian and Anthony, thus becoming *a civitas libera* in 42 BCE (Plutarch, *Brut.* 46; Pliny the Elder, *Nat.* 3.36)²¹. When Octavian and Anthony turned on each other, Thessalonica stood at first for Anthony, even to the point of inaugurating a new era in his honour. But after Octavian's decisive victory over Anthony in 31 BCE at the battle of Actium, Thessalonica was again quick to switch its allegiance, and became a supporter of the new Emperor. Jerome Murphy-O'Connor informs us about erased inscriptions dating from this period that bear witness to the Thessalonians early commitment to Mark Anthony, but also their subsequent 'embarrassment' and proverbial adeptness in redressing an unfortunate situation²².

Because of its behavior in recent history, the city of Thessalonica was not seen as embodying the ideals of unconditional faithfulness to Rome or any other ruling entity in the first century CE. This fact surely played a role in how Roman authorities and also Greek rulers viewed the local voluntary associations and guilds, since these corporations were eager to play a political role in the arena of their own city.

2. Common Distrust Against Voluntary Associations

During the first century, Thessalonica had very low wages and limited opportunities for employment. Such a discouraging situation would naturally lead to widespread unemployment and even idleness (cf. 1 Thess 4,11-12). A logical outcome of this state was the impoverishment of lower status workers, who would turn to their association for support²³. Bruce W. Winter points out that in time of famine, Roman citizens were entitled to a monthly dole of corn²⁴. But since "few in the Thessalonian congregation [...] qualified if the dole was given to Roman citizens in that city"²⁵, the

²¹ ASCOUGH, *Voluntary Associations*, 48.

²² J. MURPHY-O'CONNOR, *Paul. A Critical Life* (Oxford 1996) 15; see also HENDRIX, "Thessalonica", 523-527 and *IG X/2* 83, cited by ASCOUGH, *Voluntary Associations*, 109.

²³ R. RUSSEL, "The Idle in 2 Thess 3.6-12: An Eschatological or a Social Problem?", *NTS* 34 (1988) 112.

²⁴ WINTER, "'If a Man'", 309.

²⁵ WINTER, "'If a Man'", 310. R. MACMULLEN, *Roman Social Relations 50 B.C. to A.D. 284* (New Haven - London 1974) 167.

non-slave laborers and artisans would seek support in their kinship, guilds, or friendship liaisons as a “defence against poverty, hardship and the personal patronage of the wealthy”. Since the voluntary associations functioned as social supports for their members, it is hard to deny the heavy influence which patrons and benefactors had upon them. The guilds could have functioned, and as a matter of fact they did, as a means of displaying a patron’s influence and honor, thus as a political entity²⁶. It is exactly for this reason that the civic magistrates and governors appointed by the Emperor regarded the *collegia* with suspicion. It is widely accepted today that voluntary associations during the Roman period were viewed with suspicion and carefully scrutinized even “well beyond Rome’s gates”²⁷.

Ascough is right when he depicts Paul’s exhortation in 1 Thess 4,12 “not as a means to change the fundamental constitution of the group” but as a strong encouragement to gain “legal permission to exist as that they are not singled out in such way that they must disband”²⁸. Although Harland’s remarks about the lack of evidence in Asia Minor on the application of laws on voluntary associations are correct (cf. Acts 19,23-41 and *IEph* 215, a second century edict regarding the bakers revolt)²⁹, the important body of evidence we have on how Greek and Roman officials perceived these voluntary associations, the insistence of the *collegia* themselves in

²⁶ WINTER, “If a Man”, 311; P. MARSHALL, *Enmity in Corinth: Social Conventions in Paul’s Relations with the Corinthians* (WUNT 1; Tübingen 1987) 157-164; SALLER, *Patronage*, 205; S.C. MOTT, “The Power of Giving and Receiving: Reciprocity in Hellenistic Benevolence”, *Current Issues in biblical and Patristic Interpretation*. Studies in Honor of Merrill C. Tenney (ed. G.F. HAWTHORNE) (Grand Rapids, MI 1975) 60-72.

²⁷ COTTER, “The Collegia”, 79; ASCOUGH, *Voluntary Associations*, 397.

²⁸ ASCOUGH, *Voluntary Associations*, 401.

²⁹ P.A. HARLAND, *Associations, Synagogues, and Congregations. Claiming a Place in Ancient Mediterranean Society* (Minneapolis, MN 2003), claims that “[i]ntervention of officials in associations’ life of the provinces was occasional, pertaining to the particularities of time and place and falling far short of comprehensive control (cf. Philo, *Against Flaccus* 4-5, concerning Egypt). When it comes to the province of Asia itself, we have absolutely no evidence of Roman officials dissolving such groups or applying laws regarding associations. Instead we have civic disturbances that illustrate well the sporadic nature of controlling intervention of Roman officials in connection with associations” (169).

reaffirming their loyalty to the Emperor, the State, and its epigones, and a survey of the socio-political turmoil in Roman Empire cities (in the West and in the East), all favor a scenario in which local oligarchies and imperial authorities voluntary associations were viewed with extreme suspicion and distrust by . We will turn now to a quick survey of the evidence mentioned above.

a) The Bacchanalian Cults

The cult of Dionysus is epigraphically attested dating back to 187 BCE³⁰. Following the famous conspiracy, in 186 BCE the Roman Senate suppressed their Roman counterparts, the *Bacchanales* (*Senatus Consultum de Bacchanalibus*: CIL 1.2.581). More than a century and a half later, Livy still writes about the Bacchic cults and the ban that struck them in Rome and Italy, and qualifies those kinds of cult — which encouraged people to alter the *status quo* — as a form of “debased religion” (“I’m not without suspicion, citizens, that even among you there may be one who may slip into error, for nothing is more deceptive in appearance than debased religion [*praua religio*]”, *Hist.* 39.16.6)³¹. Valerius Maximus also refers to the “mysteries of the Bacchanals” in Rome as “a practice newly introduced” which “were abolished when they passed into pernicious madness”³². The Bacchanalian crisis cast a dark shadow on voluntary associations, and subsequent crises were viewed as a reiteration of the old nightmare. Note that the presence of θίασος Διονύσου is well attested in Macedonia and Thessalonica, along with a number of other guilds³³.

³⁰ K.P. DONFRIED, “The Cults of Thessalonica and the Thessalonian Correspondence”, *Paul, Thessalonica, and Early Christianity* (Grand Rapids, MI – Cambridge 2002) 23, originally published in *NTS* 31 (1985) 336-356.

³¹ On Bacchic cults see 39.8, 9, 14-15, 17-18. See also J.A. SHELTON, *As the Romans Did. A Sourcebook in Roman Social History* (New York – Oxford 21998) 393-397.

³² Valerius Maximus, *Memorable Doings and Sayings*. Books I-V (ed. R.S. BAILEY) (LCL 492; Cambridge, MA – London 2000). In I.3.1 we read: “[Story as recorded by] Nepotianus: There were mysteries of the Bacchanals at Rome. But when at night time men and women were together and became mad, the foreign rites were abolished with much slaughter of the participants”. Cf. Cicero, *Leg.* 2.37.

³³ ASCOUGH, *Voluntary Associations*, 52-53.

b) Decrees Affecting Voluntary Associations

Even at the earliest stages of the Roman Republic, voluntary associations were given a legal status and autonomy, as Table VIII of the *Duodecim Tabulae* reads: *his (sodalibus) potestatem facit lex pactionem quam uelint sibi ferre, dum ne quid ex publica lege corrumpant* (“Guild members shall have the power...to make for themselves any rule they wish provided that they impair no part of the public law”)³⁴. The Bacchanalian crisis forced legislators to take action, and later on, when other associations became involved in subversive political attempts, the Senate had to pass a law in 64 BCE to suppress them³⁵. The policy was then reinforced by a decree in 56 BCE: according to Cicero (*Quint. Fratr.* 2.3.5), in that year the senate ordered the dissolution of all political clubs³⁶. In 48 BCE, Julius Caesar legalized only those associations with an old tradition behind them, which suggests that the high spheres’ desire for tight and thorough control over the masses collided with the strong socio-economical necessity of being organized in associations arising from below.

Augustus also attempted to regulate the proliferation of *collegia* by passing a law whereby the Emperor and the Senate were the only entities able to grant lawful status to organized voluntary associations that would undertake a public service (Suetonius, *Aug.* 32.1)³⁷. However, the promulgation of laws on this matter

³⁴ COTTER, “The Collegia”, 75, quoting A.C. JOHNSON, *Ancient Roman Statutes. A Translation, with introduction, Commentary, Glossary, and Index* (The Corpus of Roman Law 2; Austin 1961) 12.

³⁵ *Senatus consulto collegia sublata sunt, quae adversus rem publicam videbantur esse*. COTTER, “The Collegia”, 76 comments: “The shadow that had fallen on collegia was never really to lift”. H.W. BERNARIO, “A Roman Anti-Subversive Activities Law”, *CW* 45 (1952), referring to the decree of 64 BCE affirms that “the abolition of the guilds was a purely preventive measure ...” (136), realizing the strong suspicion of the Roman authorities toward organized groups.

³⁶ Another law was passed in 57 BCE by Crassus against the suspect activities of a number of political groups deemed responsible for “organized bribery”: in Cotter words, “it was obvious to all that it was possible to mask a politically seditious party under the guise of a professional or religious club” (COTTER, “The Collegia”, 76). See also P.W. DUFF, *Personality in Roman Private Law* (New York 1971) 107-108.

³⁷ Information about Augustus disbanding all guilds save the most ancient

after his death seems to indicate that his decree had only a mild impact on the actual situation. Tiberius and Gaius apparently did not experience too much trouble with voluntary associations, but Dio Cassius (60.6.6) reports a ban decreed by Claudius on the sale of cooked meat and hot water in the streets of Rome. As Cotter suggests, “these measures would have made it almost impossible for any group to meet publicly for any length of time and escape notice”. The ban was therefore intended to keep revolutionary groups from meeting under the form of a “social group”³⁸.

Up to this point, it seems that voluntary associations were considered troublesome and potentially dangerous only in Rome and the Italian peninsula. However, it is logical to suppose that Roman officials sent to administer the provinces carried with them such a congenital distrust. Pliny, governor of Bithynia, had an epistolary exchange with Trajan about the request of a city to form a company of firemen limited to 150 individuals (*Ep.* X.33.3). He felt compelled to inform the Emperor, who responded: “...we must remember that it is societies like these which have been responsible for the political disturbances in your provinces, particularly in its towns. If people assemble for a common purpose, whatever name we give them and for whatever reason, they soon turn into a political association” (X.34.1)³⁹. Another promulgation of the Senate before 136 CE and recorded in the Roman Digest 47.22.1 denied soldiers the right to have clubs in the camp and prohibited other citizens from organizing in illegal societies. Only poor people were allowed to meet once a month for the sake of religion and to gather contributions. The law apparently applied to all the Provinces, but it was necessary to specify it later on: the decree of the senate dates before 136 CE, since the edict is mentioned in *CIL* XIV 2112 (= *ILS* 7212, Lanuvium, Italy, 136 CE).

and legitimate ones is rightly questioned by Ascough on the basis of *CIL* VI 2193 (= *ILS* 4966, Rome, early I CE): ASCOUGH, *Voluntary Associations*, 398, n. 246.

³⁸ COTTER, “The Collegia”, 80-81.

³⁹ For the texts of the letters see: Pliny the Younger. *Correspondence with Trajan from Bithynia*, Epistles X (trans. W. Williams) (Warminster 1990). For a critical comment on Pliny’s request and Trajan’s response see A.N. SHERWIN-WHITE, *The Letters of Pliny. A Historical and Social Commentary* (Oxford 1966) 606-610.

A *rescript* of Septimius Severus (emperor from 193 to 211 CE) made clear that the law was valid also in the provinces⁴⁰.

The excursus above shows how Rome and Roman statesmen were deeply concerned by the activities and proliferation of *collegia* — a concern they surely exported to their jurisdictions. As a matter of fact, Roman and Italian voluntary associations were not the only ones to feel the need to dissipate any distrust and suspiciousness by underscoring their legitimacy and allegiance. Foreign and Greek speaking *thiasoi* showed the same effort. An inscription found in Rome dedicated to a society of musicians does not fail to mention that “the senate has given permission to hold meetings, to be called to assembly, and to be mustered in accordance with the Julian law by authority of Augustus for the sake of the games” (*ILS* 4966, ln. 5-8)⁴¹. The marble tablet found in Lanuvium (Italy) dating from 136 CE quotes *verbatim* (ln. 11-13) the decree of the Senate which allows voluntary association to purportedly meet on a monthly basis with the (alleged) purpose of providing funerals to its members, and then (ln. 15-18) profusely incenses not only the emperor, but the whole imperial house⁴².

The scarcity of documents, especially in the East, regarding the enforcement of Roman decrees on *collegia* is striking, especially when compared to the evident distrust and reiterated attempts to exert a reassuring control over them. Since the laws were clear enough, we can only imagine that voluntary associations proliferated almost out of control. Many of them, though *de iure* outlawed, were in practice tolerated with much suspicion. Two elements may have assured the survival of non-official associations: (i) promulgated laws seem to appear as answers to local problems and definite situations, rather than widespread political concern; and (ii) the associations would seek protection by linking themselves to local high status patrons. Nevertheless, wherever Roman imperial administrators were present, guilds were looked down upon, and were obliged to strive to show their allegiance to the State and the Emperor. An important and visible way to prove

⁴⁰ R.K. SHERK, *The Roman Empire. Augustus to Hadrian* (Translated Documents from Greece and Rome 6; Cambridge – New York – New Rochelle – Melbourne – Sydney 1988) 177.

⁴¹ Translated by SHERK, *The Roman Empire*, 177.

⁴² *CIL* XIV 2112.

their allegiance to the Empire was to actively participate in the Cult of the Emperor.

3. *Hostility Caused by the Adoption of an Exclusive Cult*⁴³

The cult of foreign gods was perceived as a threat to the natural order of things, and thus to the State itself⁴⁴. Already

⁴³ Traditionally, New Testament scholars have manifested a certain interest in exploring the Cult of the Roman Emperor in connection and in competition with the political imagery laid out in the book of Revelation. However the importance of the Imperial Cult as a pervasive and prominent reality in Greek cities, Asia Minor and even Palestine has often been downplayed in discourses about the historical Jesus and Paul of Tarsus, e.g. H. KOESTER, *Introduction to the New Testament* (Philadelphia, PA 1982) I, 366-371. More recently, nevertheless, there has been a better assessment of the Imperial Cult in all its forms (festivals, games, rituals, patronage system, etc) as the “web of power that formed the fabric of society”, so S.R.F. PRICE, *Rituals and Powers. The Roman Imperial Cult in Asia Minor* (Cambridge 1985) 274. An increasing number of scholars recognize the need of seriously read Jesus’ and Paul’s claims and mission against the backdrop of Roman imperial ideology: see for example R.A. HORSLEY, *Jesus and the Spiral of Violence. Popular Jewish Resistance in Roman Palestine* (San Francisco, CA 1987); J.D. CROSSAN, *The Historical Jesus. The Life of a Mediterranean Jewish Peasant* (San Francisco, CA 1991); D. GEORGI, *Theocracy in Paul’s Praxis and Theology* (Minneapolis, MN 1991); R.A. HORSLEY (ed.), *Paul and Empire. Religion and Power in Roman Imperial Society* (Harrisburg, PA 1997). However, some scholars are still skeptical about the presence of a subversive, anti-Imperial language especially, but not only, in Pauline writings, and therefore attach little importance (if any) to the relevance of the Cult of the Emperor for early Christian studies. Cf. PRICE, *Rituals and Powers*; P. ZANKER, *The Power of Images in the Age of Augustus* (Ann Arbor, MI 1988); J. SCHEID, *La religion des Romains* (Paris 1998); M. CLAUS, *Kaiser und Gott. Herrscherkult im römischen Reich* (Stuttgart – Leipzig 1999); J. SCHEID, *Religion et piété à Rome* (Sciences des religions; Paris 2001); I. GRADEL, *Emperor Worship and Roman Religion* (Oxford Classical Monographs; Oxford 2002); D. FISHWICK, *The Imperial Cult in the Latin West. Studies in the Ruler Cult of the Western Provinces of the Roman Empire* (Leiden 2004) 4 vols.; J. SCHEID, *Quand faire c’est croire. Les rites sacrificiels des Romains* (Collection historique; Paris 2007). Of special interest is J. WHITE, “Anti-Imperial Subtexts in Paul: An Attempt at Building a Firmer Foundation”, *Bib 90* (2009) 305-333, where the subversive anti-Imperial character of Pauline texts is maintained, but on the grounds of second Temple Jewish-apocalyptic discourse.

⁴⁴ G.W. BOWERSOCK, *Studies on the Eastern Roman Empire. Social, Economic and Administrative History Religion Historiography* (Bibliotheca Erod-

Cicero (*Leg.* II.32-35) warned against the private cult of new or strange divinities, evoking the ominous events of the bacchanalian crisis. Dionysus of Halicarnassus also linked the importance and necessity of a proper way to honor the gods with the virtues of good citizens. According to him, Roman citizens (who allegedly had some form of aversion towards foreign gods) had to ‘scrutinize’ the foreign ways of worship and only adopt the best and decorous ones⁴⁵. Livy also insists upon the necessity of being protected from foreign cults that could pollute the celebrated *more Romano* (*Hist.* 39.16.8-9). The same fear is tangible in the account made by Valerius Maximus (I.3.3)⁴⁶ of the ban of the Jews from Rome (138 or 139 BCE) promulgated by Cornelius Hispanus, called Hispalus by Valerius⁴⁷.

Not surprisingly, many stories circulated at the beginning of the first century AD about how to worship the gods properly, about the heroic deeds of people who sacrificed themselves to the gods for the common good, and about the intimate relationship between respect for the natural law, the prosperity of a the state, and the commonwealth⁴⁸. Valerius exalts the *amore patrie* and the *pietas*

itorum 9; Goldbach 1994): “... the emperors were *divi* – deified – rather than *dei* ... The emperors were honoured and celebrated, but they were not the same as Zeus, Heracles, or Asclepius. Even though Greek is less able to accommodate the distinction between *divus* and *deus*, Greek writers show unmistakably that they felt the difference” (328). Cf. p. 198-206 of the same book, where she quotes, for instance, Aristides (*Or.* XIX), who reports that Smyrna enjoyed its unparalleled prosperity *kai pròs theòn kai pròs humòn* (“thanks to the gods and to you [the emperors]”) (199).

⁴⁵ Dionysus of Halicarnassus, *The Roman Antiquities* (LOEB; Cambridge – London 1968) II.18.1-3. Cf. also II.19.1-5, where talking about the imported cult of the goddess Cybelê in 205 BCE to Rome from Pessinus (Asia Minor), Dionysus makes fun of the awkward way the Phrygians used to worship: “[they] carry her image in procession through the city ... [they] walk in procession in a party-coloured robe, begging alms and escorted by flute-players. The Roman senate issued a decree according to which no native Roman could follow such pompous display, because so cautious are they (the Romans) about admitting any foreign religious customs and so great is their aversion to all pompous display that is wanting in decorum” (II.19.5).

⁴⁶ It is worth nothing that, in this section of his book, Valerius puts on the same level the Jews and the Chaldaeans (astrologers).

⁴⁷ Gnaeus Cornelius Scipio Hispanus, praetor for foreigners in 138 (or 139) BCE.

⁴⁸ E.g., Valerius Maximus, V.6. *Preface*: “Piety (*pietas*) has done justice to

erga patriam as the holiest laws of Nature (*sanctissimisque Naturae legibus*)⁴⁹. The profound attachment to one's own city and *patriae* was deeply rooted in the worship of and faithfulness to the local gods. Dio Cassius accuses Anthony of having too lightly embraced the cult of the Egyptian gods and of having turned a cold shoulder to the Roman ones. Such an affront suffices to be discarded as a Roman citizen (*Hist.* 50.27). However, despite the patriotic appeal of the write above, the number of foreign cults imported to Rome increased exponentially as the Empire expanded its borders (cf. Dio Cassius 6.52.36 and Suetonius, *Tib.* 36)⁵⁰.

a) The Imperial Cult in Thessalonica

The Macedonian religious situation of the time is defined by the fundamental tendencies carried on by the Greek religion of the Classical and Hellenistic period and by a tolerant attitude *vis-à-vis* foreign deities⁵¹. The widespread syncretism that characterized the region made the adoption of the worship of Egyptian gods like Isis and Serapis not a difficult task⁵². In fact, during the Imperial

the closest ties of blood. It remains that piety towards country (thus patriotism) be set in view. To the majesty of country even the authority of parents, which is equated with the divinities of the gods, subjects its power, and brotherly affection (*fraterna caritas*) too yields readily and gladly; with the best of reason, because when a household is overturned the state of the commonwealth may remain intact, but the downfall of a city necessarily drags the household gods of all its inhabitants down with it ... ”; see also V.6.2,5-6.

⁴⁹ V.6.8: “And now, to pass from individuals to the whole body, with what ardent and steady love of country (*amore patriae*) was the entire community (*civitas*) inspired! In the Second Punic War (214 B.C.) when the exhausted treasury did not even suffice for the worship of the gods, the tax farmers approached the Censors on their own initiative and urged them to let out all contracts as though the commonwealth had funds in abundance, promising to meet all requirements themselves and not ask for an *as* until the war was over”; V.6.ext. 5: “It is evident, therefore, how men of all orders and ages (*omnium ordinum, omnis aetatis*) have arisen with abundant and unstinting pity towards country (*pietatis erga patriam*). A wealth of marvellous examples famous worldwide has corroborated the holiest laws of Nature (*sanctissimisque Naturae legibus*)”.

⁵⁰ See COTTER, “The Collegia”, 79.

⁵¹ COSMOPOULOS, *Macedonia*, 51.

⁵² R. WITT, “The Egyptian Cults in ancient Macedonia”, *Ancient Macedonia I* (Institute for Balkan Studies. Papers read at the first International Symposium, 26-29 August 1968; Thessaloniki 1970) 324-333; S. DÜLL, “Die

period Thessalonica shared with Rome the veneration of a number of divinities. For instance, there is evidence that the Greek gods Castor and Pollux were venerated in both the Capitol and in the Macedonian city (cf. Suetonius, *Tib.* 20, and Dio Cassius 55.27.4)⁵³. Modern critics unanimously agree that the Cult of the Emperor was widespread in Asia Minor. Donfried reiterates the “three pieces of evidence” already mentioned by Judge⁵⁴ some fifteen years before: (i) an oath of loyalty by the inhabitants of Paphlagonia to the Caesarian house: “I swear ... that I will support Caesar Augustus, his children and descendants, throughout my life, in word, deed and thought ... that in whatsoever concerns them I will spare neither body nor soul nor life nor children ... that whenever I see or hear of anything being said, planned or done against them I will report it ... and whomsoever they regard as enemies I will attack and pursue with arms and the sword by land and by sea”; (ii) a Cypriot oath to Tiberius on his enthronement: “what is new here are the specific pledges to reverence (Σεβάσασθαι) and obedience (ὑπακούσασθαι and πειθαρχέσθαι)”; Judge concludes that “a formula of this kind might be sufficient to lead to the Thessalonians treating the oath as a ‘decree’ of Caesar”⁵⁵; (iii) an inscription from Samos which suggests that local magistrates were administering the oath of loyalty and even receiving complaints if offence were perceived to have occurred against the abovementioned oath⁵⁶.

As for the evidence of an actual presence of the Cult of the Emperor in Thessalonica in Paul’s time, Jim R. Harrison⁵⁷ draws our attention to an epigraphic record and some numismatic evidences: an inscription, which belonged to a temple to Caesar, witnessing the presence of a designated priest and superintendent

Romanisierung Nordmakedoniens im Spiegel der Götterkulte”, *Ancient Macedonia III* (Institute for Balkan Studies. Papers read at the Third International Symposium, 21-25 September 1977; Thessaloniki 1983) 77-87.

⁵³ J.S. KLOPPENBORG, “ΦΙΛΑΔΕΛΦΙΑ, ΘΕΟΔΙΑΚΤΟΣ and the Dioscuri: Rhetorical Engagement in 1 Thessalonians 4.9-12”, *NTS* 39 (1993) 285.

⁵⁴ E.A. JUDGE, “The Decrees of Caesar at Thessalonica”, *RTR* 30 (1971) 1-7.

⁵⁵ JUDGE, “The Decrees”, 7.

⁵⁶ DONFRIED, “The Cults”, 33.

⁵⁷ J.R. HARRISON, “Paul and the Imperial Gospel at Thessaloniki”, *JSNT* 25 (2002) 71-96.

of the sacred games (ἀγωνοθέτης) for Augustus “son [of God]”⁵⁸; a series of coins bearing on the obverse the legend ΘΕΟΣ upon the head of Caesar and on the reverse the head of Caesar’s son, Octavian, with the inscription ΘΕΣΣΑΛΟΝΙΚΕΩΝ or even ΘΕΙΣΕΒΑΣΤΟΥ; finally, an earlier format of a coin displaying on the obverse the head of Zeus and on the reverse a prow with the legend ΘΕΣΣΑΛΟΝΙΚΕΩΝ is modified by replacing Zeus’ head with the head of Augustus with the legend ΚΑΙΣΑΡ ΣΕΒΑΣΤΟΣ⁵⁹. An unpublished but often quoted Thesis by Holland L. Hendrix adduces more evidences for the factual presence on the Imperial Cult in Thessalonica⁶⁰.

b) Paul’s Critique of the Cult of the Emperor

Comparing the well known first decree of the Asian League concerning the new provincial calendar (Priene, 9 BCE)⁶¹ and the Pauline eschatological vocabulary of 1 and 2 Thess (εἰρήνη, 1 Thess 1,1; 5,3.23; ἐπιφάνεια, 2 Thess 2,8); ἐλπίς, 1 Thess 1,3; 2,19; 4,13; 5,8; 2 Thess 2,16; εὐαγγέλιον, 1 Thess 1,5; 2,2.4.8.9; 3,2; 2 Thess 1,8; 2,14; σωτηρία, 1 Thess 5,8-9; 2 Thess 2,13; χαρά, 1 Thess 1,6; 2,19-20; 3,9), Harrison reads 1 Thess 4,13-5,11 as a systematic critique of the “imperial propaganda of his day” and the “Augustan eschatology and apotheosis traditions”⁶². He shows, how throughout 1 and 2 Thessalonians, Paul deliberately uses vocabulary drawn from the semantic field of the Cult of the Emperor. For instance, παρουσία (1 Thess 4,15) is found in an inscription from Tegea (“... *parousia* of the god Hadrian in Greece”)⁶³, and its Latin equivalent appears on the Neronian coins

⁵⁸ IG [X] II/I 31, ln. 5-7.

⁵⁹ Though HARRISON (“Paul”, 82) recognizes that, in this particular case, “the Thessalonians might have been making only the more modest claim that Augustus’s exercise of his *imperium* was ‘Zeus-like’”.

⁶⁰ H.L. HENDRIX, *Thessalonians Honor Romans* (Unpublished Th.D. Thesis, Harvard University 1984) esp. 330-337.

⁶¹ V. EHRENBURG – A.H.M. JONES, *Documents Illustrating the Reigns of Augustus and Tiberius* (Oxford 1976) § 98b (ln. 32-41).

⁶² HARRISON, “Paul”, 79-92.

⁶³ G. MENDEL, “Fouilles de Tégée: rapport sommaire sur la campagne de 1900-1901”, *Bulletin de correspondance hellénique* 25 (1901) 275.

specifically struck to commemorate his visit to Patras and Corinth (*Adventus Aug(usti) Cor(inthi) / Adventus Augusti*); another example is the intentional Pauline use of the word ἀπάντησις (“civic welcome”, 1 Thess 4,17), employed by Cicero in his account of Julius Caesar’s triumphal journey through Italy (49 BCE): “Just imagine what ἀπάντησις he is receiving from the towns, what honours are paid to him!” (*Ad Att.* 8.16.2)⁶⁴. Harrison argues for a description of Christ in the epistles to the Thessalonians as counterpart to the “eschatological and cosmological expectation regarding Augustus”⁶⁵. Paul was preaching a gospel that required full and exclusive loyalty from the Thessalonian Christians⁶⁶.

c) Imperial Cult and Benefaction

Paul states that the Thessalonians have been noted among other believers (1 Thess 1,7-9), but they have also probably been noted by “outsiders” and fellow city-dwellers. Giving up the Cult of the Emperor and of the locally worshipped deity would also have created repercussions on the guild-members. There was a clear connection between honoring Rome God’s and benefaction. The Thessalonians honored Roman gods and even benefactors in order to “to attract and sustain influential Romans’ commitments and favours”⁶⁷.

Thessalonica adopted the cult of the goddess Roma during the first century BCE to honor its Roman benefactors. Many Roman patrons (benefactors) had set up inscriptions in the city, and in turn they were venerated along with Rome by the “priest of Rome ...[and] of Roman benefactors” (cf. *IG* X/2 31, 32)⁶⁸. The

⁶⁴ For these two examples I am indebted to HARRISON, “Paul”, 83-85.

⁶⁵ HARRISON, “Paul”, 90-91. See also E. STAUFFER, *Christ and the Caesars*. Historical Sketches (London 1955) 99.

⁶⁶ In the last part of his article, Harrison explains Paul’s emphasis on the descending from heaven of the returning Messiah “to bring to an end the present world order (1 Thess. 1.10; 4.16; 2 Thess. 1.7-8 [cf. 1 Thess. 3.13])” as somehow influenced by the belief that “the apotheosized Augustus was [...] residing in the heavens” (HARRISON, “Paul”, 93).

⁶⁷ HENDRIX, *Thessalonians*, 35-36.

⁶⁸ ASCOUGH, *Voluntary Associations*, 52; F. PAPAZOGLU, “Macedonia under the Romans”, *Macedonia: 4000 Years of Greek History and Civilization* (ed. M.B. SAKELLARIOU) (Athens 1988) 192-207.

Thessalonian Christian guild would not only suffer a congenital suspicion against *collegia tout-court* from Roman authorities, but also, and more importantly, a weakened connection with Roma-related benefactors. The patronage system was intimately connected with the religious system based on the Cult of the Emperor, which also operated at the level of the political administration of Roman cities⁶⁹. By rejecting the Cult of the Emperor, the Thessalonian Christians undermined the imperial social (household-benefaction system) structure. For this reason, the Christian group at Thessalonica could not easily turn to a Roman benefactor.

In addition to a weakened connection with these Roman benefactors, giving up the locally worshipped deities and the Cult of the Emperor created negative repercussions for the Christian group on another level: they would be at risk of persecution at the hands of their fellow city dwellers. According to Acts 17,1-7, the city of Thessalonica had already been in uproar because Paul, Silas, Jason, and others affiliated with them were accused of “acting against the decrees of Caesar, saying that there is another king, Jesus”. As a result of this accusation, the people and the city authorities (τὸν ὄχλον καὶ τοὺς πολιτάρχας) were “troubled” (ταράσσω)⁷⁰. Paul was fully aware of the risk of mob violence against Christians who had been singled out because of their beliefs and consequent attitudes towards well established customs and worldviews. As Ramsay MacMullen pointed out, actual or threatened stoning was not unknown in the Eastern cities of the Empire such as Athens (Philostratus, *Vit. Soph.* 526; Lucian, *Demonax* 11), Iconium (*Acta apost.* 14.5), Ephesus (Philostratus, *Vita Apoll.* 1.16), Smyrna (*ibid.* 4.8), Hypata in Thessaly (Apuleius, *Met.* 1.10), Larissa (*ibid.* 2.27), Parium (Lucian, *Peregrinus* 15), and Antioch (Libanius, *Or.* 1.209)⁷¹.

⁶⁹ HORSLEY, *Paul and the Empire*, 10-24; 88-95.

⁷⁰ Cf. also Acts 16,12-24: Paul and Silas are accused in Philippi (Macedonia) of advocating customs not lawful for Romans “to accept or practice” (v. 21). As a result of this accusation, “[t]he crowd joined in attacking them, and the magistrates had them stripped of their clothing and ordered them to be beaten with rods” (v. 22, NRSV). See also DONFRIED, “The Cults”, 349-350 on *OGIS* 532:6 (Paphlagonian loyalty oath to Augustus and his descendants, March 3 BCE) and HARRISON, “Paul”, 79.

⁷¹ MACMULLEN, *Roman*, 66, 171, n. 30.

This background aids in understanding Paul's injunction to endure persecutions from fellow countrymen (1 Thess 2,14) by keeping a low profile, minding their own affairs (4,11), earning the respect of outsiders (4,12), loving them (3,12), and not repaying evil for evil (5,15), but holding fast to the promise of God's revenge (2,16)⁷². Ultimately, the adoption of an exclusive cult by the Thessalonian Christian group alienated them from the patron-client system (potential Roman benefactors) and their own countrymen.

4) *Hostility Caused by the Willingness to Be More Involved in the Political Life of the Town*

An ulterior factor to be considered is the relationship between Thessalonian Christians and local Greek oligarchis.

The Empire had shorn little interest in extending political or social power to artisans and merchants, but had granted a number of privileges to the wealthy and their associations⁷³. Interestingly, it appears that in the Eastern provinces, during the first half of the first century CE, a series of class hostility incidents occurred in Sardis, Nicaea, and Smyrna (Philostratus, *Life of Apollonius* 4 § 10)⁷⁴. This hostility was likely due to contemplated in the frustration felt by artisans and workmen as they powerlessly contemplated their inability to fully participate in the redistribution of the benefits of the urban society⁷⁵. "Full participation" was

⁷² Cf. MALHERBE, *The Letters*, 65.

⁷³ C. LEE, "Social Unrest and Primitive Christianity", *The Catacombs and the Colosseum. The Roman Empire as the Setting of Primitive Christianity* (eds. S. BENKO — J.J. O'ROURKE) (Valley Forge, PA 1971) 137, n. 36: "The widening of citizenship under the early Empire generally was limited to men of property and wealth or individuals who had provided meritorious service to the state (e.g., soldiers). Although citizenship was somewhat more common among members of the lowest class in the West, the actual political (and social) rights of the poor were small or nonexistent everywhere in the Empire". See also A.N. SHERWIN-WHITE, *The Roman Citizenship* (Oxford 1939) 167-170; id., *The Letters of Pliny*, 610.

⁷⁴ Episodes of slave rebellion occurred through the time of the Late Republic: see G. ALFÖLDY, *The Social History of Rome* (Totowa, NJ 1985) 67-73.

⁷⁵ See LEE, "Social Unrest", 129.

impossible because the city council (βουλή) of the Greek cities, originally composed of members elected at regular intervals since the time of the Republic, gradually evolved into a permanent body with life membership. By the point that, by the beginning of the Imperial age, permanent councils were a reality in most of the Greek cities of Asia⁷⁶. Striving to enhance the economic stability of his kingdom in Judea and Asia Minor, Augustus simply tolerated these established Greek oligarchies for the administration of local power⁷⁷. Remarkably, in at least one instance Augustus did not want to re-establish the βουλή of Alexandria because he was not totally sure of the loyalty of its Greek inhabitants (P. Oxy. XXV 2435 *verso*, ln. 56-58; the city council was eventually restored by Septimius Severus: Dio Pruss., *Orat.* 51.17.2-3)⁷⁸.

By the time of Paul, the Eastern provinces of the Empire were struggling with social and political unrest: on the one hand, the Greek oligarchies reclaimed and *de facto* wielded their power despite *in loco* Roman magistrates; on the other hand, the lower strata of society started developing some ambitions, especially in the cities⁷⁹. The story of Petraeus reveals digardes a glimpse of the nature and the extent of the power held by Greek oligarches within their cities⁸⁰. A century after the event, Plutarch (*Praec. Rei pub. Ger.* 19.815D) recounts that L. Cassius Petraeus fought against Hegesaretus to support Caesar's hegemony in Thessalia. Since Thessalia was still the cradle of oligarchy families hostile to the Caesars, Petraeus was killed by the local dissident power when Caesar was assassinated (Cicero, *Phil.* 13.33). A few years later, Augustus presided over a trial in Thessalia (κάισαρος κρῖμα), but even after his intervention the dissidents had the audacity — and the political power — to burn alive Petraeus, son of Cassius Petraeus, a Thessalian general loyal to the Imperial house, like his

⁷⁶ G.W. BOWERSOCK, *Augustus and the Greek World* (Oxford 1965) 87-88.

⁷⁷ E.S. GRUEN, "The Imperial Policy of Augustus", *Between Republic and Empire. Interpretations of Augustus and His Principate* (eds. K.A. RAAFLAUB – M. TOHER) (Berkeley – Los Angeles – Oxford 1990) 414; J.E. STAMBAUGH – D.L. BALCH, *The New Testament in Its Social Environment* (Library of Early Christianity 2; Philadelphia, PA 1986) 18-20; BOWERSOCK, *Augustus*, 87.

⁷⁸ BOWERSOCK, *Augustus*, 90.

⁷⁹ ALFÖLDY, *The Social History*, 133-141; LEE, "Social Unrest", 130.

⁸⁰ Recalled by BOWERSOCK, *Augustus*, 104.

father. As this story indicates, there is no doubt about the actual power of local oligarchies in cities like Thessalonica.

Concerning the ambitions of the lower strata, Roman attempts to sedate social unrest and exert actual political control in the Eastern provinces by granting privileges to artisans date from the time of Claudius (41-54 CE), and were reiterated in the time of Trajan (99-117) and Hadrian (117-138)⁸¹. A speech (*Orat.* 34) delivered by Dio Chrysostom in the city of Tarsus presents an interesting example of the change in the socio-political panorama of the time. In his discourse delivered before a public gathering of the citizens of Tarsus, Dio Chrysostom “comes as a messenger from God in time of need”⁸². Addressing the Tarsians affected by internal conflicts, he states: “... a day or two ago the Assembly (δῆμος) took one course and the Council (βουλή) another” while “the Elders (οἱ γέροντες) still maintain a position of independence” (34.16)⁸³. Dio Chrysostom then mentions, among the political bodies of the city, “a group of no small size (πλῆθος οὐκ ὀλίγον) which is, as it were, outside the constitution (ἔξωθεν τῆς πολιτείας). And some are accustomed to call them linen-workers (λινουργοὺς)” (34.21).

The group in question was very likely a guild of linen-workers⁸⁴. Dio underscores their lack of a role in the political arena of the city, and describes the conflicting feelings of the city-dwellers towards the association of linen workers:

...at times the citizens are irritated by them and assert that they are a useless rabble and responsible for the tumult and disorder in Tarsus, while at other times they regard them as a part of the city and hold the opposite opinion of them ... Well, if you believe them to be detrimental to you and instigators of insurrection and confusion, you should expel them altogether and not admit them to

⁸¹ Claudius decided to extend decisional power (and citizenship) to those who until then had been alienated by the old system: BENKO and O'ROURKE, *The Catacombs*, 55.

⁸² *Dio Chrysostom, III* (trans. J.W. COHOON — H.L. CROSBY) (LOEB; Cambridge, London 1961) 335.

⁸³ F. POLAND, *Geschichte des griechischen Vereinswesens* (Leipzig 1909) 99, thinks that “the Elders” formed a distinct political organization in many cities of that time. Even “the Youth” (τοὺς τε νέους, Dio III, 34.21) would be another political party (POLAND, *Geschichte*, 95).

⁸⁴ POLAND, *Geschichte*, 117.

your popular assemblies (ἐκκλησίαις); but if on the other hand you regard them as being in some measure citizens ... then surely it is not fitting to disfranchise them or to cut them off from association with you (34.21-22).

Dio tries to convince the city that these hand-workers should not be considered “outsiders” (ἀλλότριοι), but should be “enrolled as citizens” and regarded as members of their “body politic” (μέρος αὐτῶν)⁸⁵. Dio implores the citizens to not rely on the “present system” (34.24), but to acknowledge that the leaders — who were at odds with the general appointed by Rome — are “not competent” and that finally “citizens alone are not enough to solve the problem” (34.28). Dio concludes his appeal for political change with the exhortation to “behave mildly, considerately, with regard to your honour, and not in the spirit of hostility and hatred” (34.47).

If Dietmar Kienast is correct about Dio’s intent — *i.e.*, Dio Chrysostom promoted Trajan’s new policy on the administration of the Eastern provinces⁸⁶ — then the working classes were finally successful in their attempts to share the political arena of their city. Dio was witnessing a widespread change in the socio-political panorama of the Eastern provinces which had its *momentum* in the ferments and tensions of the first half of the first century CE (and probably even before). In this study, I suggest that even the Christian hand-worker association of Thessalonica was somehow influenced by this change.

In this light, the injunction to “strive to keep quiet” (1 Thess 4,11), motivated by the necessity of walking “decently toward the outsiders” (v. 12), seems to indicate that Paul was concerned about how the Christian community related to outsiders, among which were the Greek politarchs. Like Dio Chrysostom, Paul fashioned a

⁸⁵ Dio III, 34.23.

⁸⁶ D. KIENAST, “Ein vernachlässigtes Zeugnis für die Reichspolitik Trajans: Die zweite tarsische Rede des Dion von Prusa”, *Historia* 20 (1971) 62-80. Trajan (98-117) chose imperial administrators regardless of their origin (competence was the more regarded skill), giving a special consideration to the administration of the provinces (BENKO – O’ROURKE, *The Catacombs*, 73). Trajan’s new policy was effective on more than the macroscopic level, and was the obvious result of the new social awareness and political changes that preceded him.

new ethic in which he inferred that political and social behaviors are intimately entwined. Abraham J. Malherbe showed that “to remain quiet and mind one’s own business” (1 Thess 4,11) is an appeal to withdraw from political affairs (cf. Dio Cassius, *Hist.* 60.27)⁸⁷, and Ronald F. Hock too acknowledged that the wording of such an expression (ἡσυχάζειν καὶ πράσσειν τὰ ἴδια) is drawn from the semantic field of political expressions⁸⁸. Both Hock and Malherbe agree that Paul was encouraging the Thessalonian Christians to remove themselves from public life. While recognizing that such a stance was not motivated by eschatological concerns, or the need to display a new form of “workshop morality”⁸⁹, or because toil and handwork were values in Judaism, they situate Paul’s injunction to quietism on the grounds of philosophical reflection⁹⁰.

Without denying the possibility that Paul was familiar “with the moral traditions of the Greco-Roman philosophers”⁹¹, Paul’s first concern did not lie in his desire to differentiate his community from contemporary philosophical parties, i.e., Stoics, Cynics, and Epicureans⁹², but in the urgency to provide practical advice to assure the community survival. The economic recession affecting the Eastern provinces of the Empire during the first century CE left this Christian group reliant on the support of patron-client relationships. Unfortunately, due to their allegiance to Christ and the incompatibility of this allegiance with the Cult of the Emperor and the gods, the Christian Thessalonians could not rely on

⁸⁷ A.J. MALHERBE, *Paul and the Thessalonians*. The Philosophic Tradition of Pastoral Care (Philadelphia, PA 1987) 97. Id., *The Letters*, 247: “The first infinitive, dependent on φιλοτιμεῖσθαι, is ἡσυχάζειν (“to live a quiet life”), which had long described withdrawal from active participation in political and social affairs”, quoting as examples Chion, *Epistle* 3.5 and Plutarch, *Stoic Rep.* 1043A-D.

⁸⁸ HOCK, *The Social Context*, 46. He also quotes (91, n. 192) Plutarch, *Praec. ger. rei publ.* 798E-F, who describes a career in public life as τὰ κοινὰ πράσσειν, while quietism is designated by the term ἡσυχία.

⁸⁹ So A. DEISSMANN, *Light From the Ancient East* (New York 1927) 313-314.

⁹⁰ See HOCK, *The Social Context*, 46-47; MALHERBE, *Paul*, 97-98, 101-106; id., *The Letters*, 246-247.

⁹¹ HOCK, *The Social Context*, 47.

⁹² MALHERBE, *The Letters*, 248-249.

imperial patrons. Instead, they appeared to have turned their attention to the local Greek oligarchs, who, in turn, exploited the political role of voluntary associations for their ongoing conflict with magistrates and rulers sent by the Empire: Greek patrons would gain more power in the city by having a larger *clientela*. This appears to have resulted in hostility towards the Christian group from the Roman rulers, since the Christians not only challenged the social system of the Empire by giving up the Cult of the Emperor, but also indirectly supported the pretensions of local Greek oligarchs.

In the meantime, the Empire promoted a broad wave of socio-political renewal in the Eastern provinces in an attempt to regain control over cities ruled *de facto* by Greek oligarchies. The Christian Thessalonians appear to have strived to claim the rights offered by the Empire's new policy, which would obviously have displeased any potential Greek patrons. The end result of this complicated picture would be that the Christian group of Thessalonica put its own existence in jeopardy by attracting the contempt of both Greek and Roman influential personalities. Paul is therefore using political language when he coins the oxymoronic expression φιλοτιμεῖσθαι ἢ συχάζειν ("strive to keep quiet", 1 Thess 4,11), knowing that his readers would easily relate his exhortation to quietism to their "dangerous" striving for more involvement in the politic life of their town. The verb φιλοτιμέομαι was mainly used to describe the ambitious efforts of people who hoped to gain honor by their active involvement in political, and thus public, activities (cf. Philo, *Rewards* 11)⁹³. Moreover this specific verb, when followed by verbs in their infinitive form (as precisely in 1 Thess 4,11), depicts the strong desire for or ambitious attempt to obtain a given thing (cf. Xenophon, *Oec.* 21.6; Plato, *Phaedr.* 232A); the fact that φιλοτιμέομαι and its cognates frequently appear with σπουδάζειν ("to be eager or earnest") shows the intensity correlated to the 'striving' (Epictetus, *Diatr.* 4.4 title; Philo, *Creation* 81; *Dreams* 2.55; *Embassy* 60; Plutarch, *Them.* 5.4; *Garr.* 504A; *Stoic rep.* 1036B)⁹⁴.

⁹³ MALHERBE, *The Letters*, 246.

⁹⁴ The word was also used sometimes as the equivalent of generosity (Plutarch, *Cic.* 3.1; *Phoc.* 31.3), and it could even describe hospitality (Philo,



Although Paul's exhortation to turn from striving for political engagement to aloofness "might have sounded Epicurean"⁹⁵, it arose from a completely different concern. Paul knew that the Thessalonian Christians were regarded with diffidence by the Roman rulers simply because they were a hand-worker association in the reckless city of Thessalonica. He knew that the tradition of the city (quick in changing allegiance, when necessary) did not plead in their favor. But this was still bearable, especially in light of the fact that a more real menace to the Christian *ekklesia* came from their visibility in the Roman and city dwellers' eyes caused by their rejection of the Cult of the Gods and the Emperor and by their indirect support of the local Greek oligarchy's pretensions against Roman rulers. The Christian Thessalonians were also in danger of drawing upon themselves the wrath of the Greek patrons because of their eagerness to participate in the redistribution of the city's resources — a pretension fostered by the Empire's interests in regaining control over perhaps dissident and *de facto* unlimited local oligarchic powers.

In light of the historical background reconstructed in this study, it appears that in 1 Thess 4,11-12 Paul is exhorting the local Christians to keep quiet and take a stance of political quietism — so as to remain incognito in their city — as a survival strategy. This behavior would help them remain unnoticed by imperial authorities (Roman benefactors), city dwellers, and local politarchs (Greek patrons), and secure the association's continuance. *Bene qui latuit, bene vixit* ("One who has lived unnoticed has lived well", Ovid, *Tristium* III. 4.25).

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Abraham 110) and the ambition of common folk (Philo, *Agriculture* 63): MALHERBE, *The Letters*, 246.

⁹⁵ MALHERBE, *Paul*, 104, citing Seneca, *Epistles* 68.10, who "was aware that by advising Lucilius to live quietly he might appear to be giving the same advice as Epicurus".

SUMMARY

Assuming the Christian group of Thessalonica to be a professional voluntary association of hand-workers (probably leatherworkers), this paper argues that 1 Thessalonians in general, and especially the injunction to “keep quiet” (4,11), indicates Paul’s apprehension regarding how Roman rulers, city dwellers, and Greek oligarchies would perceive an association converted to an exclusive cult and eager to actively participate in the redistribution of the city resources. Paul, concerned about a definite practical situation rather than a philosophically or even theologically determined attitude, delivered precise counsel to the Thessalonians to take a stance of political quietism as a survival strategy.

ANIMADVERSIONES

A Brief Discussion of the Difference between Human and Divine חמה

Biblical חמה is an expression of displeasure that has the potential to precipitate punitive acts of violence¹. Though חמה is ascribed to both man and God in the Bible, its syntactic behavior differs depending on whether it is used to describe man's anger or the anger of God. When חמה describes human anger, its context highlights the experience of being aggrieved. By contrast, when חמה describes divine anger, its context emphasizes God's reprisal. We suggest that the distinctive focus of divine חמה on the consequences of provocation instead of on God's own experience of anger reflects a biblical struggle to reconcile the anthropomorphic idea of an emotional God with an omnipotent and invulnerable deity. We begin by discussing human חמה, and our observations about human חמה will serve as the backdrop against which we examine divine חמה.

I. Human חמה

The noun, חמה, denotes human anger (or excitement) 25 times in the Hebrew Bible². Whether human חמה appears in post-exilic texts, as it most frequently does or, texts from an earlier period, its grammatical context highlights the experience of being angry instead of the consequences of anger³. Thus, we see that human חמה occurs as the

¹ D. GRANT, *Divine Anger in Biblical Literature* (PhD diss. New York University; New York 2009) 1-126. See also B. BALOIAN, *Anger in the Old Testament* (American University Studies; New York 1992). Other terms that fit this definition of anger include עברה, כעס, זעף, זעם, אף, קצף and אף.

² Gen 27,44; 2 Sam 11,20; 2 Kgs 5,12; Esth 1,12.2,1.3,5.5,9.7,7.10; Pss 37,8.76,10; Pro 6,34.15,1.18. 16,14.19,19.21,14.22,24.27,4.29,22; Isa 51,13 (2x); Ezek 3,14; Dan 8,6. This list excludes Job 13,13 which requires an emendation, and includes Jer 6,11 which describes Jeremiah as "filled" with God's חמה. Other meanings of חמה in the Bible include poison and fiery wine Deut 32,24; Ps 58,5.

³ חמה is especially common in post-exilic texts, only occasionally appearing in earlier texts such as Gen 27,44; 2 Sam 11,20; 2 Kgs 5,12.

subject of verbs that describe the experience of the provoked⁴, the object of verbs (usually passive) that describe being provoked⁵, and as an adjective that describes the provoked⁶.

Human חמה is a dynamic passion that rises up within an individual and fills him, only to subside or turn away. As the object of a passive verb, חמה fills an individual. Haman is filled with חמה (Esth 3,5). Nebuchadnezzar is filled with חמה that transforms his face אשתנו בארץ נבוכדנצר התמלי חמא וצלם אפוי (Dan 3,19)⁷. As the subject of an intransitive verb, חמה rises up within David המלך (2 Sam 11,20) and turns away from Esau אשר-חשוב חמת אחיך (Gen 27,44). It also burns within Ahasuerus (Esth 1,12) only to subside later on בשך חמת המלך (Esth 2,1).

The description of חמה burning בו (Esth 1,12) may reflect its etymology. Some scholars suggest that חמה derives from the root *yhm*, which means, "to be hot"⁸. Perhaps, biblical חמה is perceived as embodied heat because the physiological effect of anger is a rise in temperature⁹.

The emphasis of human חמה on the state of being angry is indicated not only by the Bible's descriptions of the effects of חמה on its bearer, but also by the Bible's descriptions of the effects of חמה subsiding. When Ahasuerus's חמה rises, he burns, and when it subsides, he remembers עליה (Esth 2, 1). Conversely, Rebecca predicts that when Esau's חמה turns away, he will forget עד אשר-חשוב חמת אחיך...ושכח את אשר-עשת לו (Gen 27, 44-45).

While both remembering and forgetting can be impactful on others, they do not immediately describe the experience of those being remembered or forgotten. This is made clear in Genesis 27. When Esau

⁴ E.g. Gen 27, 2; 2 Sam 11,20; Esth 1,12 (with an implicit direct object). 2,1.7,10.

⁵ As the object of passive verbs see Esth 3,5.5,9; Jer 6,11; Dan 3,19 (Arm. hithpeel). As the object of active verbs see Ps 37,8; Pro 15,1.21,14.

⁶ E.g. Pro 15,18.29, 22. It also occurs periodically as an adverb that modifies reprisal. See 2 Kgs 5,12; Ezek 3,14; Esth 7,7.

⁷ The metaphor of containment, being filled with anger, is used to describe the body's experience of anger cross-culturally. For example, in Tunisian Arabic, anger is depicted as a liquid or solid substance that is "contained" in the brain, heart or nerves — R. HUPKA, "Anger, Envy, Fear and Jealousy as Felt in the Body: A Five Nation Study", *Cross Cultural Research* 30 (1996) 260-268.

⁸ K. SCHUNCK, "חמה," *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament* (eds. G. BOTTERWECK – H. RINGGREN) (Sheffield 1980) IV, 462-465.

⁹ Tunisian Arabic depicts anger as burning, "He half-boiled my brain to me like a half-cooked egg", and, "He left my blood to boil" — HUPKA, "Anger, Envy, Fear", 243-264.

hears that Jacob stole his blessing, he experiences hatred and anger, and determines to kill Jacob. Notably, the passage links Esau's plot to kill Jacob to his hatred for him — not his anger at him *אחי יעקב את-ואהרנה את-יעקב על-הברכה אשר כרכו אביו ויאמר עשו בלבו יקרבו ימי אבל* (Gen 27,41). The Bible cites Esau's anger only to disclose that when his *חמה* will subside, he will forget what Jacob did to him *... ושכח את אשר-עשתה לו עד אשר-חשוב חמת אחיך* (Gen 27,44-45). Since it is unlikely that Esau will forget the theft itself, perhaps the passage means to convey that when his anger subsides, Esau will forget his experience of lethal hatred. Either way, the Bible links Esau's hatred to his lethal plan and Esau's anger to his internal state of remembering.

Esther 2 also underplays the role of *חמה* in punishing the provoker. When Ahasuerus's *חמה* subsides, he remembers not what he did to Vashti, but what *was done* to her *ואת אשר-עשתה ואת אשר-נגזר עליה* as if it was not him, in his anger, that exiled her (Esth 2, 1).

II. Divine *חמה*

By stark contrast with human *חמה*, whose syntactic context either identifies or modifies the experience of being angry, the syntax of divine *חמה* emphasizes the consequence of provocation. *חמה* is applied to God around 90 times. It occurs most frequently as the object of transitive verbs that describe a provocation¹⁰. *חמה* occurs also as the subject of passive verbs that depict God's reprisal¹¹, and as an adverb that modifies God's punitive act against His provoker¹². Additionally, *חמה* occurs in the Prophets as part of the curious construct, God's "cup of *חמה*"¹³.

In contrast to humans who are afflicted with their own *חמה*, God uses His *חמה* to punish transgressors. As such, whereas human *חמה* is frequently the object of intransitive verbs that describe the experience of being provoked (i.e. rises, abates), divine *חמה* is frequently the object of transitive verbs that describe the effects of God's *חמה* on His provoker. God repays *חמה* to His adversaries *גמול לאיביו* (Isa 59,18). He pours out *חמה* on the nations that do not know Him *שפך-חמתך על הגוים אשר לא-ידעוך* (Jer 10,25). He vents and spends *חמה* at Israel *בבלותי חמתי בם* and *והנחותי חמתי בם* (Ezek 5,13).

¹⁰ It occurs in this context circa 32 times. E.g. Num 25,11; Deut 9,19; Isa 59,18; Jer 10,25; Ezek 5,13; Ps 79,6.

¹¹ E.g. 2 Kgs 22,13; Jer 7,20; 2 Chr 12,7.

¹² E.g. Ezek 19,12; 2 Chr 28,9; Ps 6,2.

¹³ Isa 51,17-21; Jer 25,15-33.

Both human and divine חמה are linked to passive verbs. However, whereas human חמה serves as the object of passive verbs that describe the state of being angry (i.e. to be filled with anger), divine חמה serves as the subject of passive verbs that describe the trajectory of anger toward its target. This distinct function of divine חמה is observed most starkly in the relationship of חמה to the verb “to burn”. Human חמה burns its bearer (i.e. Ahasuerus burns with חמה) and divine חמה burns outward toward an object. God’s חמה is kindled at His people יהוה אשר-היא נצתה בנו (2 Kgs 22,13). God’s חמה goes out and burns because of the people’s evil מעלליהם (Jer 21,12). It burns the forest and everyone/thing that is nearby (Jer 21,14). In other words, when anger is anthropomorphically applied to God, its embodiment as heat is projected outward onto the target of God’s anger, thus directing attention away from God’s state of being angry¹⁴.

Throughout the Bible, God’s חמה is concretized as something that is poured¹⁵. The verb “to pour”, is a surprising modifier of God’s anger because human anger, which we might assume is the model for divine anger, is not typically perceived as a concrete substance that can be poured. Nevertheless, in keeping with its typical syntactic contexts, חמה occurs as the object of the active (transitive) verb form of שפך and as the subject of the passive verb forms of שפך and נהך. God pours out His anger upon Jerusalem עליהם (Ezek 20,8). His anger is poured out upon the dwellers of Jerusalem ואפי וחמתי (Jer 42,18).

In keeping with the metaphor of anger as a liquid, Isaiah and Jeremiah ascribe to God a cup of חמה (Isa 51,17-22; Jer 25,14-16). Isaiah 51 describes the Babylonian disaster as the outcome of God forcing Jerusalem to drink from his cup of חמה את-כוס חמתי (Isa 51,17). Similarly, God instructs Jeremiah to make the nations drink from His cup of חמה (Jer 25,15). Jeremiah describes God’s cup of חמה as a cup of wine (Jer 25,15)¹⁶ and Isaiah describes its drinkers falling down drunk (Isa 51,21). However, Isaiah states also that the drinkers are not drunk from wine עניה ושכרת ולא מיין (Isa 51,21). If not wine, then just what is within the cup of חמה?

The conception that stands behind the depictions of God’s poured חמה as well as the related descriptions of God’s cup of חמה has intrigued scholars for some time and there is no consensus regarding the *Sitz im*

¹⁴ See also 2 Kgs 22,17; Ps 89,47; Isa 66,15; Jer 4,4.

¹⁵ See also Isa 34,2; 2 Chr 34,25; Ps 79,6.

¹⁶ In the phrase חמה היין החמה, both wine and anger possess definite articles. Therefore, the phrase should not be translated as “the cup of wine of anger”, but rather, “the cup of wine, the anger”. Perhaps a more idiomatic rendering would be, “the cup of wine that is anger”.

Leben of these descriptions¹⁷. In light of our observation that divine חמה focuses on its targets, we suggest the substance alluded to in the descriptions of God's poured חמה and his cup of חמה is blood.

Though human anger is not a tangible substance that can be poured or drunk, human blood is such a substance. In fact, human blood is the substance most frequently described as poured in the Bible¹⁸. Moreover, we observed above that Jeremiah 25 describes the cup of חמה as a cup of wine and Isaiah 51 links it to drunkenness¹⁹. In their discussions of God's חמה, Isaiah 51,17-21 and 63,2-6 identify wine with blood²⁰.

¹⁷ There has been much debate over the *Sitz im Leben* of the image of God's cup of anger. Following H. Gressmann, W. HOLLADAY, *Jeremiah. A Commentary on the Book of the Prophet Jeremiah Chapters 1-25* (Hermeneia; Philadelphia, PE 1986) 673, suggests that the image of the cup of God's anger arose out of an Israelite cultic meal that was held in the sanctuary. According to this theory, drinking from God's cup of wine represents an "anti-banquet ... a grotesque and macabre reversal" of a festive banquet that would have wine. H. BRONGERS, "Der Zornesbecher", *Oudtestamentische Studien* 15 (1969) 178-179, disagrees and points out that there is no other food present to indicate a banquet. He suggests, instead, that the substance in the cup of God's anger is poisoned wine (compare to Hab 2,15). W. MCKANE, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Jeremiah*. Commentary on Jeremiah XXVI – LII (ICC; Sheffield 1996) 488, counters that wine itself makes a feast and that Brongers' suggestion does not explain why Jeremiah identifies, at least initially, the drink with wine. MCKANE (*Jeremiah*, 489-491) suggests that given the lethal nature of the cup's contents, the image of drinking is modeled after the "trial by ordeal", outlined in Numbers 5,16-28. While the "trial by ordeal" may or may not be the rite that lies behind the image of drinking from Yahweh's cup, McKane's suggestion suffers from the same sort of problem as does Brongers' model. It does not explain why the prophets identify the substance within God's cup as wine. Hence, it is not surprising that MCKANE (*Jeremiah*, 491) accedes "The 'trial by ordeal' model does not itself constitute a sufficient interpretation of the 'cup of wrath' passages, because it does not explain why the contents of the cup should be wine". In fact, he entertains the possibility that the contents within the cup are wine. We point out that neither "anti-banquet" (Holladay, McKane) nor the "trial by ordeal" (McKane) take into account the wartime setting of both Jeremiah 25 and Isaiah 51.

¹⁸ See Gen 9,6; Jer 7,6; Ezek 14,9; Ps 79,10.

¹⁹ Note that Jeremiah 25 juxtaposes the image of God forcing the people drink wine and fall by the sword against the image of God trampling a winepress to make wine (25,30). With this association, Jeremiah identifies God's production of "red" wine with God's demand that the people drink and be bloodied. Jeremiah 46 reinforces the link between drinking and blood that is spilt by the sword when it describes God's sword drinking the blood of the people (46,10).

²⁰ Isaiah 63,2-6 describes God staining his clothes red with wine when he

If blood is, in fact, the substance alluded to in the descriptions of God's liquid חמה then, again, we see that the focus of divine חמה is on anger's consequence and not God's experience of anger. By modifying God's חמה with the verb "to pour", a verb that more aptly describes the consequences of His חמה — the blood that is poured out of those felled by the sword — the Bible focuses its description of God's חמה on the experience of God's provokers (Jer 44,3-6; Ezek 9,8.14.19-22). Similarly, by describing God forcing people to drink from His cup of חמה, the Bible portrays the people swallowing the consequences of their own guilt — their blood that is spilt by the sword²¹. By identifying God's חמה with its consequences, the Bible communicates that the people have caused their own downfall.

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Studies from the fields of religion and psychology suggest that anthropomorphic depictions of divine anger would possess certain features that align closely with biblical descriptions of human anger, and other features that diverge from the human model in order to highlight the distinctive nature of God's divinity²². In support of these studies we have proposed that the syntactic differences between human and divine חמה reflect broader theological differences regarding the nature of God's anger. We suggest that these differences reveal the Bible's reluctance to cast God as emotionally vulnerable. By applying a recognizably human emotion to God and accompanying it with depictions of divine reprisal, the Bible conveys the danger of transgressing God's will. At the same time, by underplaying allusions to God's inward experience of anger, the

trods upon grapes in a winepress. Notably, the passage incorporates anger language into its description of winemaking (ואדרכם באפי וארמסם בחמתי) and wine language into its description of anger (ואבוס עמים באפי ואשכרם בחמתי). By using the term "eternity" within both descriptions first, to describe the wine that Yahweh sprays on His clothes (ויז נצחם על-בגדי וכל-מלבושי אנאלתי) and then, to describe the blood of the people (ואוריד לארץ נצחם) the passage suggests that the sprayed wine represents the spilt blood.

²¹ See also Hab 2,15.

²² See, for example, T. FRETHEIM, "Theological Reflections on the Wrath of God in the Old Testament", *Horizons in Biblical Theology* 24 (2002) 1-26 and P. MALLERY – S. MALLERY – R. GORSUCH, "A Preliminary Taxonomy of Attributions to God", *The International Journal for the Psychology of Religion* 10 (2000) 135-156.

Bible depicts an emotional God who is invulnerable to human transgression. On the contrary, God transforms His חמה into an instrument of divine punishment²³.

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SUMMARY

The term, חמה, is a frequent descriptor of anger in the Bible. Notably, its syntactic context depends on whether חמה describes human anger or the anger of God. The syntax of human חמה highlights the experience of being aggrieved whereas the syntax of divine חמה emphasizes the consequence of provocation. As such, human חמה tends to be the subject of intransitive verbs and the object of passive verbs that describe the experience of being provoked. By contrast, divine חמה tends to be the object of transitive verbs and the subject of passive verbs that describe God's reprisal. Additionally, divine חמה occurs as part of the curious construct "cup of חמה". We believe that these observations reflect an underlying struggle to reconcile the anthropomorphic idea of an emotional God with an omnipotent and invulnerable deity.

²³ On anger as a weapon of God see Exod 15,3-8; Isa 10,5-6; Jer 21,6; Hab 3,8-15; Ps 18,7-16.

Goliath's Death and the Testament of Judah

In a 1978 short note championing an alternative reading of a certain detail in the David and Goliath narrative, Deem argues that, rather than striking Goliath on the forehead and killing him, David's stone was actually aimed at one of the Philistine's greaves, in order to render him temporarily immobile so that David could run over and kill him. According to Deem, this reading of "greaves" rather than "forehead" in 1 Sam 17,49 is based primarily on iconographical and lexical considerations¹.

Deem first points out that most depictions of Philistine warriors in ancient Near Eastern artefacts and reliefs show them wearing helmets covering the forehead and often reaching down to the bridge of the nose. This renders it less likely that David would aim his stone at the well-protected forehead. She then argues that the word "greave" מִצָּחָה in 1 Sam 17,6, pointed in the MT as a feminine singular construct but uniformly translated in the plural in the versions, may have originally been a defectively-written feminine plural construct מִצָּחָה². After all, this provides a better agreement with the following "on his feet" (עַל-רַגְלָיו) as the location where the greaves were worn³. Noting further that the plural of the masculine noun מִצָּח "forehead" actually takes a feminine form מִצָּחוֹת in Ezek 9,4, Deem argues for the possibility that the underlying form for "greaves" in v. 6 may not be the assumed hapax legomenon מִצָּחָה but מִצָּח, a word identical in form to the word for "forehead". In fact, Deem speculates that the greaves worn by Goliath may have been so novel that there was no name for it in Hebrew, thus prompting the biblical author to coin the term מִצָּח for it because the shape of the greaves resembles in reversed position the tip of the helmet that protects the forehead. This possibility that מִצָּח means both "forehead" and "greaves" thus leads to a certain degree of confusion in v. 49, with the result that most translators and interpreters

¹ For full detail of the argument, see A. DEEM, "'... And the Stone Sank into His Forehead': A Short Note on 1 Samuel XVII 49", *VT* 28 (1978) 349-351.

² Note, however, that P.K. McCARTER, JR., *1 Samuel* (AB 8; Garden City, NY 1984) 286, prefers to emend the form to a dual construct מִצָּחָתַי.

³ However, J.M. SASSON, "Reflections on an Unusual Practice Reported in ARM X: 4", *Or* 43 (1974) 409-410, speculating that רַגְלָיו may be a euphemism for the genitals, thinks that the feminine singular construct מִצָּחָה may in fact be preferable if it indicates some kind of codpiece rather than greaves.

automatically associate *מִצָּח* with its more common meaning “forehead” rather than the rare and more technical “greave”. Therefore, contrary to the common assumption that it was the Philistine’s forehead that was hit, Deem contends that in reality, the stone sank into the open space in one of Goliath’s greaves designed to allow the bending of the knees, thus restricting his mobility and causing him to stumble and fall.

Subsequent to its publication, Deem’s proposal has found an able advocate in Fokkelman, who further buttresses the theory’s credibility with careful observations from the text. Among these, Fokkelman points out in particular that had David’s stone struck Goliath on the forehead, the force of impact from the projectile would surely cause the Philistine to fall backwards and not with his face to the ground as v. 49 clearly indicates⁴. From a literary and theological standpoint, Fokkelman further argues that understanding David’s stone as having struck Goliath’s greaves rather than his forehead would make for a much more effective and telling denouement since it would result in the formidable irony that the source of Goliath’s downfall is then placed at the exact spot where his strength would have been: the massive armour that seemingly rendered him invincible before had turned against him in the end⁵.

Unfortunately, in spite of the arguments put forth by Deem and Fokkelman, the reading they championed has not gained wide acceptance. Scholars have commonly cited two main objections.

The first concerns the matter of plausibility. In rejecting Deem’s reading, Tsumura, for example, opines that a stone sinking into the Philistine’s greave “probably would not have knocked a giant down, certainly would not have left him helpless when David came and took his sword”⁶. Similarly, Klein wonders if a hit above the opening at the tip of the greaves that allows knee movement would be sufficient to knock a giant down⁷. But against these objections, it must be remembered that not only was Goliath wearing a heavy metallic armour that weighed approximately 126 pounds exclusive of the bronze helmet and greaves, he was also carrying a spear the tip of which alone weighed another 15 pounds⁸. In addition, he also had a scimitar slung over his shoulders and was apparently also carrying a sword with a sheath (cf. v. 51). For

⁴ J.P. FOKKELMAN, *Narrative Art and Poetry in the Books of Samuel* (Assen 1986) II, 186; ID., *Reading Biblical Narrative. An Introductory Guide* (Louisville, KY 1999) 32.

⁵ FOKKELMAN, *Narrative Art*, 186; ID., *Reading*, 33.

⁶ D.T. TSUMURA, *The First Book of Samuel* (NICOT; Grand Rapids, MI 2007) 465.

⁷ R.W. KLEIN *1 Samuel* (WBC 10; Dallas, TX 1983) 180.

⁸ Taking a shekel to be about 0.403 ounces, KLEIN, *Samuel*, 175, estimates

someone burdened with so much excess weight, it should not take much to make him stumble. And once he fell on his face, it would be very hard to get up quickly. It is thus entirely plausible that David, unencumbered with similar combat gear, could run quickly and reach his opponent before his opponent's shield bearer, who happened to be carrying a large shield, could reach his master to offer help⁹.

As for the issue Bergen raises, that Goliath's knees were obviously protected, so that it would be illogical for David's primary offensive effort to be directed against his opponent's armoured portion, this again needs not be a problem¹⁰. If David was able to size up the situation quickly and see the openings above the greaves as a point of vulnerability that would cause his opponent to stumble and fall, it is not illogical that he would aim for that precise spot. Beside, who is to say that the forehead is necessarily less protected than the knees? After all, as Deem has pointed out, the feathered helmets worn by the Philistines already seem to offer some protection to the forehead¹¹. But the bronze helmet worn by Goliath is likely even more substantial than the feathered ones depicted in reliefs of Ramses III¹². In fact, that the LXX has "through the helmet (διὰ τῆς περικεφαλαίας)" added to v. 49 to read, "The stone sunk into his forehead through the helmet and he fell facedown on the ground" suggests that, at least to certain LXX translators, Goliath's helmet was understood as offering some protection to his forehead. Thus, the objection that David would not have targeted his opponent's armoured portion could just as well have applied to the traditional reading that understands מִצָּח in v. 49 as "forehead".

But there is yet a second and much weightier objection to Deem's proposal, and it concerns the absence of external support for her alternative reading. As Bergen points out, Deem's reading of מִצָּח in v. 49 as "greave" is supported neither by ancient translations nor modern versions¹³. But while there is admittedly no direct external support for Deem's reading, this author believes that a piece of indirect evidence may

the coat of armor to weigh approximately 126 lbs. (or 57 kg.) and the tip of the spear, approximately 15 lbs. (or 6.8 kg).

⁹ K. GALLING, "Goliath und seine Rüstung", *Volume Du Congrès*. Genève 1965 (Leiden 1966) 157-158, n. 3, thinks that the מִצָּח referred to in v. 7 is likely not the Canaanite small square shield but either a larger round shield or a standing shield. TSUMURA, *Samuel*, 444, likewise points out that according to HALOT, the מִצָּח is a large standing shield covering the whole body.

¹⁰ R.D. BERGEN *I*, 2 *Samuel* (NAC 7; Nashville, TN 1996) 197, n. 61.

¹¹ DEEM, "A Short Note", 349.

¹² See GALLING, "Goliath", 161-162.

¹³ BERGEN, *Samuel*, 197, n. 61.

be found that points to the possibility of a very early (no later than early 3rd Century CE) understanding of v. 49 along the lines of Deem's proposal. And it is to this evidence that the remainder of this article will now turn.

In her article, Deem cites a tradition from the pseudepigraphal account of Judah's exploits in the Testament of Judah within the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs. In T Jud 3,1, Judah is said to have single-handedly killed the armoured king of Hazor by striking him on the greaves, thus bringing him down and allowing him to be killed. This suggests to Deem that the practice of aiming at the greaves may have been a legitimate and known practice in certain ancient combat situations¹⁴.

But perhaps there is more to the connection between 1 Sam 17 and the Testament of Judah than Deem realised. Instead of T Jud 3,1 merely bearing witness to an ancient combat strategy, perhaps what the Testament is really bearing witness to is an early interpretation of 1 Sam 17 along the lines of Deem's proposal. After all, it is widely recognised that the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs contain midrashic stories that drew heavily from Hebrew Scripture, possibly through the LXX¹⁵.

Where the Testament of Judah is concerned, scholars have generally recognised that the portrayal of Judah's courage in T Jud 2,4, where Judah boasts of plucking a kid from a lion's mouth and taking a bear by its paws and killing it, may have been drawn from 1 Sam 17,34-37. Thus, Kugler writes, "The description of Judah's energetic pursuit of various kinds of animals ... recalls David's daring defence of his flock (cf. T. Jud. 2.4a and 1 Sam 17,34-36 ...)"¹⁶. Likewise, commenting on T Jud 2:4, Hollander and de Jonge asserts, "We find clear references to David's activity as a shepherd in 1 Sam. 17,34-36"¹⁷. Summarising the contents of the Testament of Judah as a whole, Rabbi Kohler also writes in the Jewish Encyclopedia, "Judah narrates to his children (ch. i.-vii., ix.) the feats of strength which he, who was, like David, destined to be a king, had displayed in his youth"¹⁸.

But while a certain degree of dependence of T Jud 2 on 1 Sam 17 seems to be well recognised, few have spoken explicitly about how this dependence may have been extended to the T Jud 3, where the reference

¹⁴ DEEM, "A Short Note", 350.

¹⁵ R.A. KUGLER, *The Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs* (Sheffield 2001) 23.

¹⁶ KUGLER, *Testaments*, 57.

¹⁷ H.W. HOLLANDER – M. DE JONGE, *The Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs. A Commentary* (Leiden 1985) 188.

¹⁸ K. KOHLER, "Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs", *The Jewish Encyclopedia* (eds. I. SINGER et al.) (New York, NY 1905) XII, 115.

to the greaves is found. A careful reading of the T Jud 3, however, suggests that 1 Sam 17 continues to shape the narrative.

Putting aside for the moment the reference to the greaves, at least three other similarities between the T Jud 3 and 1 Sam 17 can be discerned. First, in T Jud 3,1, the two Canaanite kings are described as coming sheathed in armour (τεθωρακισμένοι). This is reminiscent of the description of Goliath being clothed in a scaled armour (θώρακα in the LXX) in 1 Sam 17,5. Second, in T Jud 3,6, when Judah is attacked by nine of Achor's men, he is said to have killed four of them by slinging stones at them (λίθοις σφενδονίσας αὐτούς). This seems to echo David's killing of Goliath in 1 Sam 17,49, when he slung (ἐσφενδόνησεν in the LXX) one stone (λίθον ἓνα in the LXX) at him¹⁹. Third, in T Jud 3,7, Jacob is said to have killed Beelesah, king of all the kings, who is "twelve cubits high (τῇ ἰσχύι πηχῶν ἰβ΄)". This height specification in cubits is reminiscent of Goliath, whose height is specified in the MT of 1 Sam 17,4 as "six cubits and a span (but ὕψος αὐτοῦ τεσσάρων πήχεων καὶ σπιθαμῆς, according to the LXX)"²⁰.

What is most significant about these three similarities, however, is not just that Greek terms similar to those found in the LXX of 1 Sam 17 are used in the T Jud 3, but that at least two of the three cases seem to represent unique contributions by the author of the Testament beyond what is found in the underlying source material of the account. For scholars of the Testament have long noticed that the account of Judah's war with the Amorites in T Jud 3–7 shares significant similarities with some midrashic haggadic material²¹. These include the 13th Century CE Midrash Wayiss'u found in the Yalkut Shimeoni and the 14th Century CE Chronicles of Yerahmeel, both of which contain a more elaborate account of the same war²². The same stories are also found expanded and

¹⁹ This is also suggested by HOLLANDER – DE JONGE, *Testament*, 191, who referenced T Jud 3,6 back to the David and Goliath story in 1 Sam 17,40.49.

²⁰ Again, HOLLANDER – DE JONGE, *Testament*, 191, referenced T Jud 3,7 to 1 Sam 17,4 when they speak of Beelisah being regarded as "a super Goliath".

²¹ See R.H. CHARLES, *Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament in English*. With Introductions and Critical and Explanatory Notes to the Several Books (Oxford, 1913) II, 290; M. DE JONGE, *The Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs. A Study of Their Text, Composition, and Origin* (Assen 1975) 61; HOLLANDER – DE JONGE, *Testament*, 185-186.

²² According to HOLLANDER – DE JONGE, *Testament*, 26, the Chronicles of Yerahmeel is considered a parallel text of Midrash Wayiss'u, such that Hollander and de Jonge actually include an excerpt of an English translation of the Chronicles of Yerahmeel in their Appendix II, but title it Midrash Wayiss'u.

embellished in the medieval Book of Yashar. In addition, the apocryphal Book of Jubilees (c. 135-105 BCE) also refers to the same events, although the account in Jub 34,1-9 is significantly more concise than the rest.

Because T Jud 3-7 and the late haggadic material just cited all show the same plot sequences and contain a number of verbal correspondences, scholars generally agree that these material are likely based on the same underlying source²³. The more obscure account in T Jud 3-7 is therefore thought to be an extract from an elaborate account likely similar to Midrash Wayiss'u in its present form²⁴.

What is noteworthy here is that a comparison of T Jud 3 with both the Chronicles of Yerahmeel and the Book of Yashar shows that out of the three cases cited above where echoes of 1 Sam 17 are found in T Jud 3, in two of them, the point of similarity between the Testament and 1 Samuel seems to involve details that set the Testament apart from either of the haggadic works. Thus, whereas Ch Yerah 36,4 and Yashar 37,44-45 both speak of Judah using a stone (singular) to defend himself from nine attackers, the impression being that the stone was used as a striking weapon²⁵, in T Jud 3,6, Judah is portrayed as slinging stones (plural) to kill four of his nine attackers. Likewise, the specification of the height of Jacob's adversary in cubits in T Jud 3,8 is a detail not found in Ch Yerah 36,4 or Yashar 38,1-2²⁶. What these observations seem to suggest is that additional influence from 1 Sam 17 may have helped shape the account in T Jud 3, as the author supplemented his source material with extra details from the biblical account to forge a stronger rhetorical link between Judah/Jacob and their most prominent descendant David²⁷.

²³ Note, however, that a few minor but significant plot variations do exist between the account in T Jud 3-7 and the late haggadic accounts. For detail, see DE JONGE, *Testaments*, 62-64.

²⁴ See KUGLER, *Testaments*, 29; HOLLANDER – DE JONGE, *Testament*, 26-27; DE JONGE, *Testaments*, 61-62; 70-71 for more detail.

²⁵ This is most clear in Yashar 37,45, which says, "And Judah hastened and took up a stone from the ground, and with it smote one of them upon the head, and his skull was fractured, and the body also fell from the horse to the ground". This is less clear in Ch Yerah 36,4, which simply reports, "Judah broke the head of the first who approached him with a stone, and killed him on the spot". But even here, the stone is clearly singular.

²⁶ Note, however, that the name of Jacob's victim in the Testament is different from that found in the two haggadic accounts. In Ch Yerah 36,4, the king Jacob killed with an arrow is Zehori King of Shiloh. Likewise, in Yashar 38,1-2, Jacob's opponent was Ihuri King of Shiloh. But HOLLANDER – DE JONGE, *Testament*, 191, speculate that the name Beelisah in T Jud 3,7 may have been the result of an earlier corruption of "Lord of Shiloh (בעל שילה)".

²⁷ This portrayal of Judah to parallel David is also seen in other parts of the

But if this is true, then the mention of Judah striking the King of Hazor at his greaves in T Jud 3,1 would take on added significance. For like the two cases cited earlier, the striking at the greaves is also a detail unique to T Jud 3 that appears in neither the Chronicles of Yerahmeel nor the Book of Yashar. For although Ch Yerah 36,5 does mention Jacob killing a certain King of Hasor with the arrow, while Yashar 38,5-6 also mentions Jacob slaying a King of Chazar with an arrow, T Jud 3,1, however, departs from both haggadic works by attributing the killing of the King of Hazor to Judah when he struck him at the greaves (κνιμῖδας), thus bringing him down and allowing him to be killed. Since this is apparently another instance where the Testament's departure from its underlying source material coincides with a detail related to 1 Sam 17, a case can be made that this mention of the greaves may also be an attempt by the author of the Testament to supplement his source material by drawing on 1 Sam 17 in order to forge a rhetorical link with David.

To be sure, according to the traditional understanding, the only direct mention of greaves in 1 Sam 17, be it מִצָּחַת in the MT or κνιμῖδες in the LXX, is in v. 6²⁸. But if, for the sake of argument, one accepts the possibility that מִצָּחַת in v. 49 was in fact understood as referring to the one of the greaves as Deem suggests rather than to the forehead, then not only would the correspondence between the relevant details in the two texts become much more direct, it would also have become immediately clear why the author of the Testament would introduce this seemingly puzzling detail about striking at the greaves into his account of Judah's exploits²⁹. For T Jud 3,1 would then constitute a direct plot parallel with 1 Sam 17,49, thus making the rhetorical link with David quite obvious.

If this is indeed the case, then in portraying Judah as striking at an enemy's greaves to bring him down, the author of the Testament may have borne indirect witness to a tradition that understands מִצָּחַת in 1 Sam 17,49 as one of the greaves rather than forehead. Thus, instead of T Jud 3,1 offering evidence to support the practice of striking at the greaves in certain combat

Testament. As KUGLER, *Testaments*, 97, notes, for example, in T Jud 11, Judah's being lured into marriage with the beautiful Bathshua and the subsequent death of his children from that marriage by God's hand may represent a deliberate attempt to echo David's adulterous affair with Bathsheba and subsequent death of the son from that affair.

²⁸ Thus, commenting on the mention of the greaves in T Jud 3,1, HOLLANDER and DE JONGE, *Testament*, 191, writes "cf. 1 Sam 17,6 (Goliath!)"

²⁹ It should be pointed out that had the author of the Testament simply wanted to craft a rhetorical link to Goliath by referring to one of his combat gear from the list in 1 Sam 17,5-7, it is indeed strange that he would choose the most obscure item from that list.

situations as Deem seems to think, the possible dependence of T Jud 3,1 on 1 Sam 17,49 (and not 17,6) may actually constitute an early albeit indirect witness to an understanding of מִצְחָ in v. 49 as “greave”. And even though the exact date of composition of the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs remains uncertain as it is still being debated whether the work is fundamentally Jewish or early Christian, even a late dating of the work to 225 CE still offers some very early support for the possible understanding of מִצְחָ in v. 49 as “greave”³⁰. If the Testaments are in fact composed as early as the late 3rd to middle 1st Century BCE as some suggest, then it would have borne indirect witness to Deem’s proposal that may predate even some of the ancient translations³¹.

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SUMMARY

In a 1978 article, Deem proposed to read מִצְחָ in 1 Sam 17,49 as “greave” rather than “forehead”. However, this reading has not gained wide acceptance partly because its lack of external support. This article explores the possibility that the description of a combat detail in the pseudepigraphal Testament of Judah may in fact be traceable to an understanding of 1 Sam 17,49 in line with Deem’s proposal. If so, this may constitute the very external support needed to lend further credibility to the reading championed by Deem.

³⁰ See KUGLER, *Testaments*, 31-38 for a detailed discussion and evaluation of the three main options regarding the date of composition for the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs. For support for a Christian origin, and hence, a late date of composition, see, for example, DE JONGE, *Testaments*, 121-25 and *Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament as Part of Christian Literature*. The Case of the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs and the Greek Life of Adam and Eve (SVTP 18; Leiden 2003).

³¹ For more recent arguments for an essentially Jewish origin, and hence, a core for the Testaments that dates back to as early as the 3rd Century BCE, see, for example, J. BECKER, *Untersuchungen zur Entstehungsgeschichte der Testamente der Zwölf Patriarchen* (AGJU VIII; Leiden 1970); A. HULTGÅRD, *L'eschatologie des Testaments des Douze Patriarches*. I. Interpretation des texts (AUU HR 6; Uppsala 1977); and J.H. ULRICHSEN, *Die Grundschrift der Testamente der Zwölf Patriarchen*. Eine Untersuchung zu Umfang, Inhalt und Eigenart der ursprünglichen Schrift (AHH HR 10; Uppsala 1991).

“Trembled Like Him”: Reassessment of 1 Sam 13,7b*

The Hebrew phrase, וּבְלִהֵם חָרְדּוּ אַחֲרָיו (“and all the people followed him trembling”, NRSV), in 1 Sam 13,7b is problematic because of the awkward use of the preposition, אַחֲרֵי (“behind”), with the verb, חָרַד (“to tremble”). However, a careful analysis of the preposition may perhaps point to a more nuanced reading which may reveal the Davidic historian’s agenda to undermine Saul’s aptitude as a military leader. According to the historian, Saul begins to show signs of fear in the face of formidable challenge, the imposing Philistine army, which then infects his army. Therefore, he is unqualified to rule Israel unlike David, the king apparent.

Before examining the phrase, its larger context needs to be discussed. The story of the Philistine war at the Michmash pass (13,2–14,46) forms the backdrop for the meeting between Saul and Samuel in Gilgal (13,7b-15a). On account of the intrusive nature of the meeting and its anti-Saulide attitude, most scholars have considered 13,7b-15a to be secondary, the work of the Davidic historian¹. While preparing for battle against the Philistines, the Israelites are mustered at Gilgal (v. 4). The author does not mention whether Saul himself went to Gilgal to gather the troops but he is found there in v. 7b². Here, in the midst of a battle, Saul waits for Samuel for seven days as the prophet had supposedly commanded him back in 1 Sam 10,8. As the storyline clearly demonstrates, more than seven days transpire between Saul’s anointment

* This work was supported by a research grant from Seoul Women’s University (2010).

¹ See J. WELLHAUSEN, *Prolegomena to the History of Israel* (Edinburgh 1885) 256-262, and M. WHITE, “Saul and Jonathan in 1 Samuel 1 and 14”, *Saul in Story and Tradition* (ed. C.S. EHRLICH) (FAT 47; Tübingen 2006) 119-138. Contrary to P. LONG, *The Reign and Rejection of King Saul. A Case for Literary and Theological Coherence* (SBLDS 118; Atlanta, GA 1989) 51-66, and D. VIKANDER EDELMAN, *King Saul in the Historiography of Judah* (JSOT 121; Sheffield 1991) 76-82.

² If we follow the Greek, then v. 7a continues in v. 15ba. According to the Greek, v. 15ba reads, “the remnant of the army went up after Saul to meet the fighting force, going from Gilgal toward Gibeah of Benjamin”. See P. KYLE MCCARTER, *1 Samuel. A New Translation with Introduction, Notes & Commentary* (AB 8; Garden City, NY 1980) 227, who thinks that the MT has a “long haplography”. Saul never goes to Gilgal; instead the army joins Saul at Gibeah, where he and his son are preparing to fight the Philistines.

and his battle against the Philistines. Whereas Saul is a young man when he is anointed as *nagid* back in 1 Sam 10, he is a father of a young man himself in chapter 13. Therefore, the same historian who inserted 13,7b-15a to undermine Saul probably added 1 Sam 10,8 to set up the story in 13,7b-15a³.

As Saul waits for Samuel in vv. 7b-15a, he begins to lose control over his troops which leads to a sequence of events resulting in his downfall. Saul waits seven days for Samuel but at the end of the specified period, he does not appear. Since Saul is anxious over the loss of his men and the brooding battle, he sets out to offer the burnt and well-being offerings, the very sacrifices that Samuel had planned to offer (1 Sam 10,8). As Saul finishes presenting the burnt offering, Samuel suddenly emerges. The story as it stands without 10,8 would not be a major indictment of Saul; he is not the only king to make a burnt offering⁴. However, with 10,8, Saul fails to obey Samuel's initial command to wait until the prophet comes so that he may make the offerings. Consequently, Saul is punished; his dynasty will not be established. Many scholars have commented on the partiality of the punishment⁵. From the perspective of the Davidic historian, however, Saul seals his own fate.

Yet the court historian does not undermine Saul only through his supposed disobedience; he also raises question about Saul's ability to lead. This doubt in Saul's leadership comes up in the phrase under discussion. The Hebrew phrase, חָרְדוּ אַחֲרָיו, in 1 Sam 13,7b is awkward and has therefore led to various translations. The verb, "to tremble" (חָרַד), does not occur with the preposition, אַחֲרֵי⁶. Normally, the Qal form of the

³ Then 1 Sam 10,7 will not be in tension with 10,8. Whereas Samuel tells Saul to "do whatever you see fit to do" in v. 7, he specifies exactly what Saul needs to do in v. 8.

⁴ However, according to D. JOBLING, *1 Samuel* (Berit Olam; Collegeville, MN 1998) 82, the text rejects Saul for making the offering; he writes, "Thou shalt not, as unauthorized personnel — even as a king — offer the burnt offering". Yet David also offers burnt and well-being offerings (2 Sam 6,17) without a single comment on its appropriateness. See D.M. GUNN, *The Fate of King Saul. An Interpretation of a Biblical Story* (JSOT 14; Sheffield 1980) 35. Consequently, Saul is rejected for disobeying Samuel's command, not for making the offering.

⁵ According to J. CHERYL EXUM, *Tragedy and Biblical Narrative*. Arrows of the Almighty (Cambridge 1992), 40, and W.L. HUMPHREYS, *The Tragic Vision and the Hebrew Tradition* (OBT; Philadelphia, PA 1985) 40-41, God is portrayed as inimical to Saul.

⁶ Based on H. TIKTIN, *Kritische Untersuchungen zu den Büchern Samuel* (Göttingen 1922) 16, *HALOT* 1, 350, actually translate the phrase, "to hurry after".

verb occurs by itself without any preposition⁷. Therefore some translations have actually linked the preposition to the subject of the clause, העם (“the people”):

And all the troops with him were quaking with fear. (NIV)
And all the people followed him trembling. (NRSV)

Similarly, JPS comments that the meaning is uncertain but translates:

And the rest of the people rallied to him in alarm.

And others have tried to make sense of the preposition with the verb:

With all the army trembling behind him. (McCarter)⁸
While all the troops went trembling after him. (Tsumura)⁹

Even the Lucian recension of the LXX provides a distinct translation. It appears to reflect the Hebrew מאחריו and is translated, “the people forsook him trembling”¹⁰. Rather than reflect a different Hebrew *Vorlage*, the Lucian recension may actually reveal an effort to translate the awkward phrase.

Based on a nuanced translation of the preposition, אחר, however, the phrase may reflect a different reading which may perhaps point to a flaw in Saul’s character. The preposition usually denotes the direction toward the hinder part when it is used with verbs “expressing or implying motion”¹¹. Therefore, it is translated as “after” in the genitive. Consequently, one “goes after” (הלך אחר), “pursues after” (רדף אחר), or “fornicate after” (זנה אחר) someone/something. However, the verb, “to tremble”, is not a verb of motion but reflects a mental or physical reaction to fear. And none of the verbs with that sense occur with the preposition אחר¹². Therefore, one could not “tremble after” or behind someone unless indicating the hinter location which most translations seem to follow. The

⁷ When the verb does occur with a preposition, it occurs with על (Isa 66,2), אל (Isa 66,5), and ב (Ezra 9,4, 10,3). All these late texts use the preposition to indicate the object causing the trembling, specifically the word of God. The people are to tremble at the word of God.

⁸ McCARTER, *I Samuel*, 224.

⁹ D. TSUMURA, *The First Book of Samuel* (NICOT; Grand Rapids, MI 2006) 340.

¹⁰ The Lucian Greek has the following reading, ἐξέστησαν ἀπὸ δρισθῆν αὐτοῦ. The preposition, ἀπό, shows the direction “away from” the subject of the genitive. See S.R. DRIVER, *Notes on the Hebrew Text and the Topography of the Books of Samuel with an Introduction on Hebrew Palaeography and the Ancient Versions and Facsimiles of Inscriptions and Maps* (Oxford 1913) 100.

¹¹ BDB, 29.

¹² None of the verbs for fear/shudder (החזיק/קצף, החזיק/אנף, זעם, בעס, התקצף/קצף, התחזק/אנף)

army was trembling behind (in the back of) Saul. Yet this presents a very positive image of Saul. Here is Saul, fearlessly standing for seven days with a band of terrified men¹³. Would a Davidic historian really want to present such an image of Saul as a brave leader? This is very unlikely.

Rather than translate the preposition as either indicating direction or position, it would make more sense as a “metaphorical locational sense”¹⁴. In other words, the army was acting “after the manner of” Saul; they were trembling like him. Though Waltke and O’Connor deal primarily with the expression involving הֵלֵךְ (“to walk”), this “metaphorical” sense is also evident with the verb הָיָה (“to be”). Two examples are present in 1 Kgs 12,20 and Exod 23,2. The first example depicts political allegiance whereas the latter focuses on the influence of popular persuasion. The tribe of Judah follows the house of David in 1 Kgs 12,20 while the people are discouraged from imitating the mass in Exod 23,2. Since the verb, הָיָה, is merely existential, the meaning lies with the preposition, which can have the meaning of “following and imitating”¹⁵. Therefore, the political allegiance is evident with just the use of the preposition in 1 Kgs 16,22. The insurgents follow either Omri (הָעָם אֲשֶׁר אַחֲרֵי עֹמְרִי) or Tibni (הָעָם אֲשֶׁר אַחֲרֵי תִבְנִי)¹⁶.

Since Saul is afraid of the Philistines who had gathered at Michmash, his fear infects the army which begins to disperse from him. Granted, the people were hiding (13,6) or running away (13,7a) earlier in the narrative. The court historian would have been fully aware of the people’s fear in the story. However, a band of men, according to the historian, decides to stay with Saul despite having ample opportunity to flee. Yet one wonders why the few brave soldiers would be trembling, unless their leader is the

אחר (פִּלְזִין, רָעַד, עָרָץ, רָגַז, חָתַת נֹר, יָגַר, בָּהֵל, פָּחַד, בַּעַת, יָרָא) occurs with the preposition, אַחֲרֵי.

¹³ This is the sense that J.P. FOKKELMAN, *Narrative Art and Poetry in the Books of Samuel*. A Full Interpretation Based on Stylistic and Structural Analyses (Assen – Maastricht 1986) I, 36, and R. POLZIN, *Samuel and the Deuteronomist*. A Literary Study of the Deuteronomistic History. Part Two: 1 Samuel (San Francisco, CA 1989) 120, highlight in their books. Yet this image is not consistent with the anti-Saul sentiment of the literary unit.

¹⁴ B.K. WALTKE – M. O’CONNOR, *An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax* (Winona Lake, IN 1990) 192.

¹⁵ F.J. HELFMAYER, “*ach-rê*”, *TDOT* I, 204-207, especially 207. He also only refers to examples of following other gods.

¹⁶ H. SIMIAN-YOFRE, *El desierto de los dioses*. Teología e historia en el libro de Oseas (Córdoba 1993), 86, observes in his discussion of Hos 5,8, that the preposition by itself can be translated as “a la manera de” or “siguiendo”. Consequently he translates Hos 5,8b as “En fanfarria en Betavén, según tu estilo [אַחֲרֵי], Benjamín!” (p. 83).

one who is afraid. This is the reason why Saul must then “restrain himself” (יִצְרֹאֵץ) from running away (13,12). Though most commentaries and translations translate the hithpalel of צָאץ as “to force oneself”, this meaning of the verb never occurs anywhere else¹⁷. And there is no reason to provide a different meaning here. Why would Saul force himself to make an offering? It makes no sense. Hence, a better reading is that Saul barely keeps himself in Gilgal, just long enough to make an offering.

Then why would the court historian choose an awkward expression, if in fact, the phrase is not a scribal mistake but an intentional use of the preposition אַחֲרֵי? Wouldn't it have been easier to write that the people trembled “with” (בְּ, עִם) or “like” (כְּ, כַּמּוֹ) him? Here, I would like to propose that the historian wanted to juxtapose Saul with Jonathan whose armor-bearer follows him into the heart of the Philistine garrison. Unlike Saul, who could not muster his army to follow him, Jonathan was able to penetrate the Philistine army with just his armor-bearer. Without 13,7b-15a, the Saulide family appears formidable against a powerful opposition. Despite the odds, Saul and Jonathan defeat the Philistines with only 600 men. Granted Jonathan's brash act of faith led to the victory; nevertheless, the success of the son cannot be distinguished from a victory for Saul (14,47). The son represented the father and his family honor (see 1 Sam 13,4)¹⁸.

With the addition, however, Saul is contrasted to his son. Since Saul appears weak, afraid and thus hesitant to engage in war, Jonathan comes across as the victor. Whereas Saul fears an encounter with the Philistines (13,12), Jonathan does not show any sign of fear. He declares:

Come, let us go over to the garrison of these uncircumcised;
it may be that the Lord will act for us;
for nothing can hinder the Lord from saving by many or by few. (14,6)

On account of his trust in God, Jonathan is able to muster his armor-bearer to penetrate the Philistine stronghold. Here, the story plays with the preposition אַחֲרֵי¹⁹. Jonathan commands his armor-bearer to come “after”

¹⁷ Despite this, BDB, 67, and *HALOT* 1, 80, still provide the definition, “to force, compel oneself” for only this passage. See also POLZIN, *Samuel and the Deuteronomist*, 129. I agree with LONG, *The Reign and Rejection of King Saul*, 89, who translates the verb, “I restrained myself (i.e. pulled myself together when the temptation was to flee)”.

¹⁸ According to WHITE, “Saul and Jonathan”, 127, “Jonathan's YHWH-inspired bravery establishes him as heir to the throne, further strengthening Saul's kingship”.

¹⁹ Not only does the court historian play with the preposition, אַחֲרֵי, he/she also uses a similar expression, כַּלְבִּבּוֹ (“according to his heart”, 13,14), found in

him (14,12) which he does (v. 13a). And Jonathan with his armor-bearer “after” him (v. 13b) kills the Philistines. Because of their proactive deed, the trembling which seized the army and Saul is now brought upon the Philistine camp, even among the special raiding party. In fact, a “great panic” was upon them all:

There was a panic in the camp, in the field, and among all the people;	ותהי חרדה במחנה בשדה ובכל־העם
the garrison and even the raiders trembled;	המצב והמשחית חדרו גם־החמה
the earth quaked; and it became a very great panic. (14,15)	ותרגז הארץ ותהי לחרדת אלהים

The same root, חרד, occurs three times in the verse. Therefore, Jonathan’s act of bravery offset the trembling in Israel’s army and actually rallied them, even the Hebrews who were in hiding, into battle against the Philistines. The Hebrews were clinging “after” them (14,22). However, Saul, with his trembling scattered the army away from him.

Yet this is not the first time in which the Davidic historian faults Saul for his fear. According to the historian, fear plagues his reign; he succumbs to it even against divine commandment²⁰. The reason why Saul disobeys God’s command to put the Amalekites under the ban is his “fear” (ירא) of the army (15,24), which wanted to keep the best of the sheep and cattle. Moreover, Saul fears David to the point of a psychological breakdown. When Saul becomes aware of God’s support for David, he fears him (18,12.15.29). The buildup of the fear parallels the slow disintegration of Saul. He becomes obsessed with capturing and killing David. By the end of Saul’s reign, he is only a shadow of the man he once was. When Saul sees the Philistine army assembled against him at Gilboa, the author explicitly describes his fear (28,5):

When Saul saw the army of the Philistines,	וירא שאול את־מחנה פלשתים
he was afraid,	וירא
and his heart trembled greatly.	ויחרד לבו מאד

14,7 (כלבבך, “according to your heart”). God seeks a person like the armor-bearer who will follow his master into the heart of the Philistine camp without fear.

²⁰ P. BORGMAN, *David, Saul, and God*. Rediscovering an Ancient Story (Oxford 2008) 24, correctly observes that “Saul’s character flaw, it appears, is not so much the wrongdoing, but a habit of the heart — a fear — that leads to the wrongdoing”.

The author is not vague about Saul's fear; Saul trembles before the Philistines. Out of sheer fear, Saul tries to inquire of God but fails miserably. In desperation, through a medium, Saul consults the ghost of Samuel who foresees only destruction. Upon hearing Samuel's words of doom, Saul falls completely on the ground because he was filled with fear (28,20). One could even argue that Saul kills himself out of fear of torture from the Philistines (31,4)²¹. In sum, the beginning of Saul's demise stems from his initial fear of the Philistines which pervades his whole reign.

It is not clear whether the Davidic historian draws from an earlier tradition or completely creates an image of a fearful leader in Saul. Yet it is an effective criticism of Saul since a leader, especially a military leader, needs to be fearless. God commands the paragon of a military leader, Joshua,

Be strong and courageous;
do not be frightened or dismayed,
for the LORD your God is with you wherever you go. (1,9)²²

Like Joshua, Saul, with God at his side (1 Sam 10,7), should not have been afraid. Instead, he is fraught with terror.

Even before God rejects Saul, he is afraid which in turn weakens the resolve of his army. Aside from disobeying God, why would the Israelites want a king who is too weak to lead them? Unlike David, who fights Goliath single-handedly and commands his men to victory against the Philistines, Saul cracks under pressure. Consequently, the Davidic historian attacks Saul's character as a leader. According to the historian, Saul begins to disintegrate in his first battle against the Philistines; therefore, he is unfit to lead.

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²¹ Though the author does not explicitly mention Saul's fear, one could compare his situation with King Zedekiah, who refuses to surrender to the Babylonians because of his "fear" (אָד) of "torture" (hithp. of עַלֵּל) under the pro-Babylonian Judeans (Jer 38,19). One could also contrast Saul's armor-bearer with Jonathan's armor-bearer. Whereas Jonathan's armor-bearer fights the Philistines like his leader, Saul's armor-bearer is extremely afraid like him (1 Sam 31,4).

²² Josh 8,1 and 10,25. As a matter of fact, people (Deut 1,21), prophets (Isa 51,7; Jer 1,17; Ezek 2,6; 1 Chr 22,13), and kings (1 Chr 28,20; 2 Chr 20,15; 32,7) are encouraged not to fear.

SUMMARY

Commentaries and translations have traditionally translated the preposition, אַחֲרֵי, in 1 Sam 13,7b (הָעָם חָרְדוּ אַחֲרָיו) as either modifying the subject or indicating the “back” of Saul. However, the preposition is better explained as “following and imitating” so that the army trembled like Saul. Since Saul was afraid of the Philistines, his fear infects the army, which scatters from him. Therefore, Saul, according to the Davidic court historian, is an ineffective military leader.

RECENSIONES

Vetus Testamentum

Stuart WEEKS, *Instruction and Imagery in Proverbs 1-9*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2007. Xii-260 p. 14 × 22,5. £ 55,00.

Gli studi sul libro dei Proverbi sono sempre più numerosi, quasi a voler colmare un vuoto che, in verità, già negli ultimi quarant'anni si è notevolmente ridimensionato: la sensibilità antropologica e la valenza teologica insite in questo testo sapienziale, hanno mosso l'ingegno e la competenza di studiosi di tutto il mondo e diverso orientamento confessionale ed ermeneutico, contribuendo alla produzione di testi di notevole valore scientifico e di inedita originalità.

Il volume di Weeks si colloca in questo contesto biblico più ampio, offrendo la sua originale prospettiva ermeneutica. L'Autore presenta il suo scritto, frutto del lavoro iniziato «a dozen years ago» (viii), nell'introduzione (1-3), spiegando la ragione dello studio, l'intenzione euristica e il piano concreto che articola il volume. Senza troppi giri di parole si definisce l'oggetto della ricerca: Pro 1-9 non è da considerarsi come una sezione staccata dall'intero contesto, quindi non è un libro che un tempo era indipendente, poiché sono innumerevoli i contatti con le altre sezioni dell'intero testo dei Proverbi. In questa monografia Weeks mostra, nello specifico, come esista una notevole unità in Pro 1-9: «Proverbs 1-9 is basically [...] neither a collection, nor the result of extensive secondary accretion around some core, but a single composition, with a more-or-less coherent viewpoint» (1).

Nel motivare questa 'scelta di campo', l'Autore esplicita la convinzione circa l'aridità degli studi condotti su Pro 1-9 che, diversamente da questo suo testo, sono maggiormente preoccupati dei problemi letterari e della definizione del genere. Una simile impostazione perde la visione d'insieme del libro dei Proverbi: pur concentrandosi sugli aspetti poetici, tali studi rintracciano, tuttavia, solo il contesto storico e sociale a questi connessi. Il risultato di una simile scelta storica è: «lack of consensus on almost all key points» (2).

L'analisi qui posta in essere è, invece, di natura sincronica più che diacronica, concentrandosi precipuamente sul genere e sull'utilizzo delle immagini ravvisabili in Pro 1-9. Sei capitoli articolano questo volume e delineano i tratti della ricerca. I primi due capitoli costituiscono una introduzione «necessary» per il prosieguo dell'argomentazione.

Il primo capitolo si intitola «The Instruction in the Ancient Near East» (4-32). Presenta una panoramica degli studi 'classici' legati a questo tema del rapporto tra Pro 1-9 e le istruzioni egizie e, in misura minore, quelle assiro-babilonesi, nella consapevolezza, già espressa nelle pagine introduttive, del fatto che questa premessa sfocia solo in ipotesi letterarie frammentarie e inconciliabili. Nel capitolo si distinguono le istruzioni più antiche sia egizie (a partire dalla IV-V dinastia egizia: *Hardjedef*, *Ptahhotep*, *Kagemni*, *Amenemope*, *L'istruzione di Khety*, *L'istruzione di un Uomo a suo Figlio*) sia babilonesi (*Le Istruzioni di Shurupak* e *L'Istruzione di un Contadino*). Gli ammaestramenti più recenti presi in esame sono: *Onkhsheshongy* (databile all'epoca tolemaica, a partire dal IV secolo a.C., scritta in demotico) e lo scritto mesopotamico di *Ahikar* (presenta un testo del V secolo a.C.). La conclusione alla quale giunge Weeks al termine di questa fugace panoramica (egli resta molto sul generale sia testi, che cita raramente, sia sulle date delle istruzioni) è la seguente: «however universal an instruction may seem, in fact, we are unlikely to understand its original purpose if we neglect its original context, because instructions do not derive their meaning and presuppositions from some body or source independent of the culture and society in which they were written» (32).

Qual è l'elemento distintivo di una istruzione? A questa domanda si cerca di rispondere nel secondo capitolo (*Proverbs 1-9 as an Instruction*, 33-66). Il confronto con le teorie avanzate da diversi studiosi e il rimando al testo che presenta una notevole diversificazione all'interno della sezione di Pro 1-9, servono ad avallare la tesi di fondo: siamo in presenza di un'unica istruzione. L'inconciliabilità delle tante e, spesso, contrastanti teorie sulla genesi, sulla composizione e sulla trasmissione del testo, confermano questo dato così evidente per Weeks. Partire dall'analisi del genere, in ultima analisi, significa avventurarsi in un vicolo cieco: una analisi concentrata attorno a quest'unico elemento, non prova altro che la disarticolazione della sezione (57). Il capitolo si chiude con il breve riferimento, solo quattro pagine, a Pro 2 e a Pro 1,10-19. L'Autore, che riferisce principalmente, su Pro 2, i risultati del lavoro di A. Meinhold (*Die Sprüche: Teil 1: Sprüche Kapitel 1-15* [ZBAT 16.1; Zürich 1991] 43-46), intravede nell'elaborata tessitura di questo capitolo – costruita attraverso una serie di proposizioni condizionali – e nei suoi richiami tematici all'intera sezione, l'accenno all'unitaria composizione dei nove capitoli, frutto della deliberata intenzione dell'autore.

I capitoli terzo e quarto rappresentano il cuore del libro: si pongono in evidenza i simboli chiave e il piano strutturale della sezione oggetto dell'indagine, esplicitando il nesso tra questi due aspetti del testo. Il capitolo terzo (*Theme and Imagery in Proverbs 1-9*, 67-95), si articola su due paragrafi: il linguaggio figurato in Pro 1-9 e il significato dell'immagi-

nario. Dalla premessa circa la difficoltà a separare il 'figurato' dal 'letterale', nasce la tesi che, dalla giusta interpretazione delle immagini veicolate attraverso il tipico linguaggio poetico, possa rintracciarsi l'unità della sezione. Tra gli esempi riportati riferiamo di Pro 1,8-19 e di Pro 7. Nel primo caso, i malvagi sono da intendere come «type» (70) della condotta da evitare e non come singoli individui realmente identificabili. Nel secondo caso, la donna è da interpretare come una «figurative personification» (71) e non, a differenza di Pro 1, come un membro tipico all'interno di una categoria o classe. L'argomentazione di Weeks conduce a questa conclusione: le immagini di Pro 1-9 vanno interpretate retamente e, questa connessione tra immagine e linguaggio, conduce all'unità tematica dei testi. Questi non sono, dunque, da intendere come «just a series of separate, figurative vignettes» (73). L'Autore critica, senza in verità entrare troppo nello specifico, la posizione di M.V. Fox (*Proverbs 1-9. A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* [AB 18A; New York 2000] 326-329) che distingue tra *Interludes* (1,20-33; 3,13-20; 6,1-19; 8,1-36; 9,1-18) e *Lectures* (le dieci istruzioni parentali) e connette cronologicamente e logicamente la sequenza dei brani. Il punto più debole che viene rimarcato in Fox riguarda l'interpretazione di Pro 8: la Sapienza non è per Weeks un trascendentale, quasi un residuo mitologico. Tale sua interpretazione è dedotta da Pro 8,30 in cui si esplicita il rapporto tra Dio e la Sapienza e non tanto quello tra la Sapienza e il mondo.

Nel quarto capitolo (*Wisdom and Character of Instruction*, 96-127) si focalizza l'attenzione attorno a Pro 3. Questo testo è da considerare, per la sua capacità di mettere insieme pietà e condotta morale, sapienza e timore di YHWH, come capitolo centrale per cogliere Pro 1-9 come istruzione. Si passano in rassegna i temi classici della letteratura sapienziale per cogliere la migliore comprensione dei brani e delle immagini: la funzione della Sapienza in Pro 1-9, il suo contesto e il rapporto con altri testi biblici, il timore di YHWH, la personificazione della Sapienza.

Nel penultimo capitolo, il quinto (*The 'Foreign Woman' and the Path Imagery*, 128-155), si approfondisce la portata della figura della Donna Straniera delineandone i contorni storici (il contesto in cui tale espressione nasce), intertestuali (il rapporto tra Pro 1-9 e altri testi biblici) e simbolici (la donna simbolo del male, dell'erotismo, ecc.).

L'ultimo capitolo, il sesto (*The Significance of Proverbs 1-9*, 156-179), mostra l'interpretazione che si è sviluppata nella letteratura biblica (in rapporto a Ben Sira, Sapienza, 1 Baruc) e giudaica (i testi di Qumran) a partire dai brani indagati in questa sede. L'autore rimane molto generico circa la datazione di Pro 1-9 (individua un periodo tra il 500 e il 200 a.C.) e il luogo di composizione. Il rapporto con la storia d'Israele, con le letterature straniere insieme ad un fugace accenno al *Sitz im Leben* di Pro 1-9,

concludono questa sezione del libro. Il capitolo si chiude con una «annotated translation» (180-229), precisando che essa non vuole essere un commento sistematico al testo ma una «convenient translation for reference» ed un ulteriore rimando filologico che, nelle note a più di pagina, non è stato possibile inserire.

Al volume manca una conclusione generale (al termine del capitolo quinto troviamo delle *General Conclusions* ma si riferiscono al capitolo medesimo), quindi quest'ultima parte funge da chiosa all'intera opera.

Il libro, così come già evidenziato, predilige l'analisi sincronica a quella diacronica richiamando, con stile chiaro, le principali questioni legate alla sezione di Pro 1-9. Lo specifico dell'opera è aver avanzato la proposta, a più riprese ribadita dall'Autore, di considerare l'unità letteraria e contenutistica (cioè legata al linguaggio figurato) dei capitoli presi in esame. Ci chiediamo se tale unità, frutto dell'intreccio tra le immagini e le tematiche affrontate, in fondo non sia rintracciata, ormai, dalla maggior parte degli autori: superata la fase in cui si frammentava il genere 'istruzione' perdendo di vista l'unità dei testi, oggi sembra esserci un sostanziale consenso circa l'unità di Pro 1-9. Resta, ovviamente, la questione della notevole eterogeneità di materiale e di generi che, forse, Weeks aggira con troppa facilità. L'aver 'liquidato' la posizione di Fox che, in qualche modo, salva l'unità pur nella diversità dei brani, a nostro parere, non rende ragione della complessità del testo biblico e del suo *background* letterario.

Si percepisce, a volte, l'impressione che l'Autore voglia confermare con i testi il suo assunto di fondo, ponendo in essere una lettura sicuramente vera ma parziale, in quanto trascura nell'analisi, o non approfondisce sufficientemente, elementi formali e storici importanti (autore/i, luogo e data di composizione, destinatari). Dispiace notare come la bibliografia sia ferma agli anni novanta, salvo poche eccezioni, trascurando di integrare recenti studi di notevole levatura che avrebbero contribuito non poco, secondo il nostro parere, alla presente ricerca.

Al di là di questi rilievi critici, l'opera di Weeks si presenta originale nella sua impostazione ed utile nella conoscenza delle principali tematiche sapienziali legate al libro dei Proverbi.

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Klaus-Peter ADAM, *Saul und David in der jüdischen Geschichtsschreibung*. Studien zu 1 Samuel 16 – 2 Samuel 5 (FAT 51), Tübingen, Mohr Siebeck, 2007, xi-256 p. 16 × 23,5.

Ce livre dense reprend le texte de la thèse post-doctorale (*Habilitationsschrift*) présentée en 2005 à l'Université Phillips de Marburg, sous la direction de Jörg Jeremias. Il comprend cinq parties. Le premier chapitre, qui tient lieu d'introduction générale, expose les résultats de la recherche actuelle sur les récits opposant Saül à David, la «chronique synchronique» des livres des rois, de David à Ezéchias (de 1 R 1 à 2 R 20), les écrits sur les rois au Proche-Orient et l'herméneutique des récits par Paul Ricoeur (1-29). Le deuxième chapitre est consacré à l'étude des traditions de Saül et David depuis l'arrivée de celui-ci chez les Philistins (1 S 27) jusqu'à son accession définitive au pouvoir et sa victoire contre les mêmes Philistins (2 S 5) (31-96). Pour chaque péricope, l'étude de sa structure, mais aussi des motifs mis en œuvre aboutit à reconstituer son histoire littéraire. On notera aussi un important excursus sur la géographie et la topologie des lieux mentionnés dans le récit (64-73). Les traditions de la fuite de David poursuivi par Saül (1 S 23-26) font l'objet du troisième chapitre (97-122). Le quatrième est consacrée aux traditions des débuts de David, jusqu'au massacre des prêtres de Nob (1 S 16-22)(123-167), avec un nouvel excursus sur les biographies des rois dans l'ancien Orient et l'Antiquité classique (161-166). Le chap. 5, enfin, tente de resituer les récits des livres de Samuel par rapport à ceux des livres des Rois («chronique synchronique»), ce qui permet à l'auteur de formuler sa thèse: les récits des débuts de la royauté ont été rédigés comme préface à la «chronique synchronique», elle-même écrite à l'époque d'Ezéchias (fin du VIII^e siècle) (169-211). Un court «résumé» (*Zusammenfassung*) ne reprend pas l'ensemble du parcours, mais seulement ses conclusions (213-215). Suivent en annexe les textes parallèles de 1 R 15,16-22 et 2 R 16,5.7-10 (216-217), une abondante bibliographie (219-244), un répertoire sélectif des références bibliques (245-252), un index thématique (253-255) et enfin un index sélectif des mots hébreux (256).

L'exposé est touffu, parfois très technique ou elliptique, ce qui exige du lecteur un grand effort d'attention; les notes représentent souvent plus de la moitié de la page. L'auteur intègre énormément de lectures et fait preuve d'une érudition impressionnante, qui va de la pensée de Ricoeur à la littérature mésopotamienne; les parallèles avec les textes proche-orientaux constituent d'ailleurs un des points forts de l'ouvrage.

La thèse vers laquelle tout le livre converge est en définitive assez simple: au niveau littéraire le plus ancien, les récits qui opposent Saül et David ont pour fonction d'anticiper les relations ultérieures entre Israël et Juda telles qu'elles sont racontées dans les livres des Rois. Ils préparent

ainsi le lecteur à accepter la disparition du royaume de Samarie, alors que la dynastie davidique lui survit. Cette première rédaction, qui utilise des éléments traditionnels, a pour cadre le règne d'Ezéchias; elle est suivie d'autres rédactions qui s'étagent jusqu'au III^e siècle. A priori, une telle reconstitution n'a rien d'in vraisemblable. L'état de la question relève que déjà R. Ficker, *Komposition und Erzählung* (diss. Heidelberg 1977), reconnaissait dans l'histoire de l'Ascension de David (1 S 15 – 2 S 5) un texte dépendant de la suite du récit dans les livres de Samuel et des Rois. Quant au procédé consistant à faire précéder l'histoire «réelle» d'une préface sur le temps des origines, déjà John van Seters avait proposé une hypothèse analogue à propos du «Yahviste» (*Prologue to History: the Yahwist as Historian in Genesis* [Louisville, KY 1992]), et Adam relève lui-même que les listes de rois mésopotamiens sont précédées par les traditions sur les gouvernants «mythiques», ce qui leur confèrent une légitimation incontestable (13-15); un phénomène analogue caractérise d'autres traditions mésopotamiennes comme l'épopée d'Etana ou les chroniques royales assyro-babyloniennes (16-20). Les dates assez basses assignées aux textes sont dans la norme de l'exégèse critique actuelle. Bref, si les solutions proposées dans ce livre sont neuves, elles ne manquent pas de vraisemblance a priori et ne surprendront pas les spécialistes. Sont-elles fondées? C'est une autre question, et j'ai le sentiment que la démonstration n'est pas concluante.

Tout d'abord, le dossier est incomplet. L'état de la question, qui fait l'objet du premier chapitre, ne retient que les éléments qui soutiennent la thèse. Le parcours à travers les livres de Samuel se fait à reculons, en partant de la fin, et certaines sections comme 1 S 21,2–22,5, 1 S 28,3–25 et 1 S 30 ne sont pas analysées. Tout cela empêche de suivre la logique d'ensemble du texte primitif et de ses élaborations successives, d'autant plus qu'il y a ni discussion sur les limites du texte, ni synthèse générale. La question des limites n'est pas sans importance, car elle conditionne celle de l'indépendance éventuelle de la *Vorlage*. La lecture que propose Adam va de 1 S 16 à 2 S 5, ce qui correspond à la présentation classique de l'«Ascension de David». Certes, il a sans doute raison de considérer que le cœur du récit concerne la rivalité entre les deux «oints», ou plus exactement entre les deux maisons royales. Cependant les limites du texte envisagé sont contestables par les deux bouts. D'une part, l'existence d'une histoire de Saül indépendante me semble peu vraisemblable et demanderait de toute manière une explication, ce qui oblige à commencer l'enquête en 1 S 8 ou 9. D'autre part, le conflit entre les deux maisons royales se poursuit encore en 2 S 6 (qui s'achève par la référence à la stérilité de Mikal) et 2 S 7 (promesse d'une maison «éternelle»). En d'autres termes, on peut envisager l'hypothèse d'un document complet, qui va de l'avènement de Saül au triomphe définitif de David et de sa

dynastie; ce document aurait pour finalité de légitimer le pouvoir de David ou de ses descendants sur l'Israël du Nord. Avant d'imaginer son rôle éventuel de préface à la «chronique synchronique» des rois d'Israël et de Juda – les liens avec les livres des Rois ne sont dans ce dossier qu'un élément parmi d'autres – il aurait été utile de vérifier si ce texte n'a pas pu être écrit pour lui-même. Il existe en tout cas une dissymétrie entre la situation finale du récit davidique (David étend son pouvoir sur l'ancien royaume de Saül et Ishbaal) et celle qui prévaut à partir du règne d'Ezéchias (l'Israël du Nord a disparu, et seul Juda survit).

La thèse que l'auteur défend repose, comme il se doit, sur les analyses détaillées. Celles-ci me paraissent dans l'ensemble trop rapides, et parfois l'affirmation tient lieu de démonstration. Prenons un seul exemple. L'épisode où David épargne Saül endormi (1 S 26) est présenté comme plus récent que celui, parallèle, d'Engadi (chap. 24) (98-99.110-111). Le seul argument présenté consiste à dire que le second récit met en scène davantage de personnages (*erweiterte Figurenkonstellation*). Il est vrai que le groupe indifférencié des hommes de David (chap. 24) fait place à des personnages comme Abishaï frère de Joab et que Saül est flanqué de son général Abner, *alter ego* de Joab pour son royaume. Cet argument est-il suffisant? J'en doute. Adam lui-même le relève: la mention d'Abishaï s'inscrit dans le cadre de la critique répétée des fils de Ceruya, dont Joab est la figure principale. Cette critique a une fonction littéraire précise: elle prépare le lecteur à accepter l'exécution de Joab par Salomon, au début de son règne (1 R 2,18-35); or ce texte composite comporte un fond pré-deutéronomiste (vv. 28*.29-31.34-35) qui justifie cette mesure par la violence récurrente de Joab. Comme Adam le souligne, l'épisode de Engadi met l'accent sur la conversation entre David et Saül, au cœur de laquelle se trouve la question de la justice humaine (vv. 12.18-20a) et divine (vv. 13.16.20b). Cette question théologique est celle de l'école deutéronomiste, qui réfléchit au devenir de la monarchie à partir d'un jugement moral sur la conduite des souverains et d'un principe de rétribution équitable. Pourquoi la dynastie davidique a-t-elle supplanté celle de Saül? Parce que David était «plus juste» (24,18; voir aussi 1 R 2,32, addition Dtr au récit de l'exécution de Joab) que ce dernier. La même perspective revient dans le dialogue entre David et Saül en 26,17-25. Or, à l'exception possible du v. 22 (suite originelle du v. 16?), cette section apparaît comme secondaire par rapport à la conversation entre David et Abner (vv. 14-16) et présente des traits deutéronomistes (motif de la terre d'Israël comme «héritage», v. 19; «j'ai péché», comme en 1 S 15,24.30). On peut expliquer sans difficulté la réduction du nombre de personnages au chap. 24: l'auteur se focalisait sur la question de la royauté, et les personnages secondaires comme Abishaï et Abner avait pour lui moins d'importance.

Le cas de 1 S 24 et 26 me semble représentatif. Pour de nombreuses autres péripécies, la reconstitution de la *Redaktionsgeschichte* est peu argumentée. La plupart du temps, les dates proposées sont possibles, mais rien n'oblige à privilégier cette possibilité précise. L'étude des «motifs», qui tient dans l'ouvrage une place importante, se comprend mieux en exégèse synchronique qu'en exégèse historico-critique; elle ne débouche que rarement sur des conclusions contraignantes quant à l'origine des textes. L'auteur entre peu en débat avec des propositions qui ne correspondent pas à sa propre théorie. Ce défaut de méthode affecte malheureusement la fiabilité de l'ensemble de la démarche.

Les liens littéraires entre les livres de Samuel et les livres des Rois forment un autre élément crucial pour la thèse que l'auteur présente. En dehors du parallélisme général entre Saül/David et Israël/Juda, Adam ne propose aucun inventaire systématique, mais il relève quelques cas au passage. L'expression «Cité de David» (2 S 5,7.9) revient une série de fois dans la «chronique synchronique» pour désigner le lieu de sépulture des rois de Juda jusqu'à Achaz (32-33), mais on remarquera une différence importante, car en 2 S 5, David vient d'être reconnu par les Anciens d'Israël. Le titre de *nagîd* (2 S 5,2) sera également attribué à Ezéchias (2 R 20,5). Surtout, la «formule d'assistance» (YHWH est «avec» David, 1 S 16,18; 17,37; etc.) n'est utilisée que pour un seul autre roi: Ezéchias (2 R 18,7). En définitive, ces liens restent assez rares, et ils n'impliquent par eux-mêmes aucune dépendance littéraire.

Bref, l'ouvrage développe une thèse qui mérite d'être explorée. De nombreuses études de détail, et notamment la mise en relation des récits avec l'histoire du droit (sur l'homicide volontaire ou involontaire, par exemple, 48-55.102-106) présentent un réel intérêt. Cependant la méthode manque de clarté et l'argumentation est insuffisante pour emporter la conviction.

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David T. LAMB, *Righteous Jehu and His Evil Heirs. The Deuteronomist's Negative Perspective on Dynastic Succession* (Oxford Theological Monographs). Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2007. xv-304 p. 14,5 × 22.

Initially a dissertation under Prof. Sue Gillingham of Oxford University, this book argues the thesis that the account of Jehu and his royal house in the Deuteronomistic History (DtrH) reveals a decisive bias against dynastic succession on the part of its author that permeates the books Samuel and Kings and can be perceived also in Joshua and Judges. Its first chapter

contends that there is void in recent scholarship that is focused specifically on Jehu's dynasty and that scholars have generally neglected the topic of dynastic succession in the DtrH. Lamb adopts Noth's position regarding the authorship of the DtrH—i.e., that it was composed by a single, exilic author/editor (Dtr). However, he adjusts Noth's date for the DtrH upward, taking the position that its last four verses (2 Kgs 25,27-30) were a later addition, and hence dating the work to ca. 580 BCE.

The second chapter, the book's longest, tries to show that the Deuteronomistic Historian presented a highly favorable portrait of King Jehu, emphasizing and repeating positive features regarding his reign and downplaying or omitting negative features. Among the former are the positive evaluation of Jehu, which is unique among Northern kings; his anointing, an uncommon ritual in the DtrH; his election by God; and his obedience to divine mandate. Among the latter, Lamb includes Jehu's connection to the Omrides; his alliances with Aram and Assyria, including his payment of tribute to the latter; and the loss of Israelite territory during his reign.

Lamb's third chapter compares David and Jehu, contending that Dtr consciously sought to liken the two of them as charismatic rulers. David is cast as the ideal monarch, and the king most like him is not Hezekiah or Josiah, as one might expect, but Jehu. The features that Lamb highlights as elements of charismatic portrayal are anointing, election, endowment with Yahweh's spirit, heroic exploits, popular support, and divine speech. While Lamb attributes these features to source material, he argues that Dtr built upon and developed them through repetition and favorable interpretation.

In the fourth chapter, Lamb discusses the four successive heirs of Jehu. All four are evaluated negatively by Dtr. Yet the accounts of three of them contain positive items that would seem to dictate a more positive perspective on them than on Jehu. Specifically, Jehoahaz, Jehoash, and Jeroboam II all succeed militarily. Jehoahaz brings an end to the Aramaean oppression begun during the reign of his father. Jehoahaz also has his prayer answered in spite of the evaluation of him as wicked, and this makes him unique in the DtrH. Jehoash defeats both Ben-Hadad of Aram and the righteous King Amaziah of Judah. Jeroboam restores Israel's borders, which were first diminished during the reign of Jehu. Jehoash and Jeroboam receive prophetic support and are the only unrighteous rulers in the DtrH so supported. Denying that Dtr's anti-northern polemic alone can account for these phenomena, since Jehu is praised by Dtr even though he was a northern king, Lamb explains them as the results of Dtr's deliberate efforts to cast Jehu's successors in a negative light in marked contrast to Jehu himself.

On the basis of his observations and arguments in these first four chapters, Lamb turns his attention in a fifth chapter to the question of

Dtr's view of dynastic succession. He concludes that Dtr favors charismatic leadership over dynastic succession, because the former reflects and requires greater dependence on Yahweh initially and throughout the period of rule. Dtr includes the dynastic promises to David and Jehu in order to show that obedience is rewarded, not because he places value on dynastic succession per se. Hence, Dtr includes more judgments against dynasties than promises, and these judgments serve as explanations for the brevity of wicked dynasties. The rise of a righteous dynastic founder followed by evil heirs is a pattern in Dtr's presentation of both Israel and Judah that betrays his anti-dynastic *Tendenz*. Dtr's message to his early exilic audience was that they should not select their leaders based solely on dynastic heritage but should rely instead on Yahweh to designate leaders charismatically.

Lamb is to be commended for presenting an erudite and well-argued thesis. His typical procedure in each chapter and according to each topic he treats is to begin by surveying the relevant evidence from ancient Near Eastern records outside of Israel, before focusing in turn on the Bible, the DtrH, and then specific texts. He thus takes stock of the broader historical, cultural, and literary context. He is also conversant with the relevant secondary literature. And he presents his arguments clearly, making generous use of tables and charts for purposes of illustration.

I find a number of features of Lamb's thesis attractive. It has the advantage, first of all, of taking the etiological nature of the DtrH more seriously than some scholarly treatments and of exploiting the understanding of the DtrH as etiology in his analysis. That is, Dtr sought to explain theologically the differences between the regnal histories of Israel and Judah. A perplexing lacuna for this perspective is the absence of dynastic oracles in Kings for the northern monarchs following the Jehu dynasty. Lamb's explanation that Dtr treated this period as one of dynastic chaos that required no special accounting in the form of a dynastic oracle is not entirely satisfying, especially when it comes to the royal house of Menahem. This is an issue that requires more careful attention, but it does not undermine Lamb's larger etiological thesis and approach.

Because of his focus on the etiological nature of the DtrH and its thematic concern with leadership, Lamb views the work as an authorial unit. However, there is some inconsistency or lack of clarity in this regard. He points out connections with episodes in Judges, and Joshua too to some extent, vis-à-vis the theme of dynastic succession that would seem to support the unity of the DtrH. Yet, in a kind of appendix to his book, Lamb raises the possibility that Samuel-Kings may have once existed as a unit apart from Joshua-Judges, based on the absence of

dynastic oracles in the latter. Lamb is certainly not unique among recent scholars in proposing independent origins for different books within the DtrH. However, the reasons that he gives for it here do not seem to be particularly convincing or to give full weight to the differences in subject matter of the books in question. Along somewhat similar lines, Lamb seems too readily to accept the so-called Succession Narrative as a source behind the DtrH, even though a number of scholars in recent decades have raised serious doubts its existence as an independent document.

On the other side of the process of composition, Lamb does not consider the possibility, again raised by a number of scholars, that the bulk of the Elijah and Elisha stories are post-Dtr additions. He does discuss the possibility, which he dismisses, that 1 Kings 20 and 22 are out of order and belong not with the reign of Ahab but with the material on the Jehu dynasty. But he does not consider the strong evidence, presented long ago by Miller and Shenkel, for the secondary nature of the MT chronology of the Jehu dynasty. Ignoring the text-critical evidence seriously weakens Lamb's acceptance of 1 Kings 20 and 22 as Omride stories. Properly (in my view) ascribing these two chapters to the Jehuistes opens Lamb's thesis to criticism on two counts: (1) it weakens his contention, based partly on his interpretation of the Tel Dan stele, that Jehu was allied with Hazael of Aram and that Dtr omitted this detail in order to improve Jehu's image; (2) it also requires nuancing of Lamb's assertion that Jehu's heirs received prophetic support.

Lamb also does not consider the possibility, admittedly proposed by fewer scholars, that the Bathsheba story is post-Dtr. Indeed, for Lamb, the "sword" that will not depart from David's house (2 Sam 12,10) is a dynastic curse that continues throughout the history of Judah until the end of the kingdom. Yet, the context of Nathan's oracle in 1 Samuel 12 strongly suggests that only Absalom's revolt, and the rape of Tamar that leads to it, are on view. This is an important matter for Lamb's thesis, for it raises some reservations about his view that Dtr presents a constant shadow looming over David's dynasty. David's behavior in the Bathsheba affair is strikingly similar to that of Ahab in regard to Naboth, as other scholars have noted, and sharply detracts from Dtr's portrait of David as model king. This point is driven home by the statement in 1 Kgs 15,4-5, which, along with its companion "lamp" texts poses perhaps the greatest problem for Lamb's view. It is difficult to read these texts as etiological explanations for the duration of the Davidic house and as showing that obedience reaps rewards without making the connection that dynasty is a reward, and as such is regarded positively by Dtr.

Beyond these reservations and questions about Lamb's thesis, there is no doubt that he has added fresh insights and a new perspective to the

scholarly dialogue on the DtrH and particularly the topic of Dtr's view of kingship. For this and for the clear and careful presentation of his ideas, the field is indebted to him.

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Pedro Raúl ANAYA LUENGO, *El hombre, destinatario de los dones de Dios en el Qohélet* (Bibliotheca Salmanticensis, Estudios 296). Salamanca, Publicaciones Universidad de Salamanca, 2007. 331 p. 17 × 23,5. €21.01

L'autore ha iniziato il suo percorso di studio nella piena consapevolezza delle difficoltà cui va incontro l'esegeta quando si cimenta nell'interpretazione di un'opera complessa e poliedrica qual è il libro del Qohélet. Già la consultazione della bibliografia, la cui mole è paragonabile all'opera di Dio "che non si può abbracciare dal principio alla fine" (14), costituisce di per sé un'impresa prometeica. Tanto meno è agevole districarsi tra le molteplici interpretazioni del messaggio qohéletiano, che si presenta spesso ambiguo e contraddittorio. Di qui la necessità di delimitare l'ambito della ricerca, per cui l'autore ha scelto di approfondire il tema della relazione tra l'uomo e Dio, con particolare riguardo all'antropologia; il lavoro è infatti dedicato allo studio dei testi che presentano l'uomo quale destinatario dei doni di Dio.

Il primo capitolo offre un'esposizione delle diverse interpretazioni della teologia e dell'antropologia del Qohélet. Nell'affrontare lo *status quaestionis* sull'argomento, Anaya Luengo ha preferito delineare prima le immagini negative e positive di Dio e poi le immagini dell'uomo, confrontandosi di volta in volta con gli autori che si sono occupati del problema. Il capitolo si conclude con la valutazione critica di alcune tra le opere più significative che sono state dedicate di recente a questo tema.

Il secondo capitolo inquadra l'opera del Qohélet nel suo contesto letterario e contiene un'esposizione ampia e dettagliata del tema del dono di Dio nella letteratura sapienziale (Proverbi, Giobbe, Siracide e Sapienza), condotta attraverso l'analisi della terminologia ricorrente.

Il terzo capitolo affronta l'argomento principale del lavoro mediante l'approfondimento dei seguenti testi: 1,13-2,2; 2,24-26; 3,10-15; 5,17-6,2; 8,10-15; 9,7-10; 12,1-7. L'analisi inizia individuando la delimitazione e la struttura della pericope e, dopo aver tenuto conto anche delle varianti testuali, procede all'esegesi versetto per versetto.

Nel quarto capitolo, che svolge una funzione conclusiva, sono sistemati i dati raccolti dall'esegesi. L'esposizione si concentra intorno al contenuto dei doni (IV,1), al criterio seguito da Dio nella loro ripartizione (IV,2), all'immagine di Dio quale soggetto dei doni (IV,3) e dell'uomo come destinatario degli stessi (IV,4). Con ciò si offre una sintesi della teologia e dell'antropologia qoheletiana.

Il lavoro, ben strutturato nella sua impostazione, ha il merito di porre in risalto l'importanza del discorso antropologico nel Qohelet e la sua relazione con la teologia, contribuendo così ad arricchire la letteratura più recente sull'argomento. Tuttavia l'uso dei due termini, antropologia e teologia, avrebbe richiesto, considerata l'importante funzione che essi svolgono nel corso della ricerca, una precisazione più dettagliata. È legittimo, ad esempio, ipotizzare, sulla linea di Zimmer (55), la possibilità di ritrovare un'antropologia "sistemica" nel Qohelet? L'intento dell'autore biblico non è invece l'opposto, cioè la contestazione di ogni sistema di pensiero, sia esso filosofico o teologico, che abbia la pretesa di afferrare il senso della realtà, compreso l'uomo? Sarebbe stato forse più appropriato parlare di un'antropologia "fenomenologica" nel Qohelet, dal momento che l'oggetto principale della sua indagine è l'uomo considerato nel suo porsi e relazionarsi nella complessa realtà della vita. È comunque impossibile pretendere di offrire una visione sistematica dei dati nell'opera del Qohelet. Ne è una prova il fatto che in questo lavoro non sia tenuto nella giusta considerazione l'interrogativo formulato in 1,3, che verte sul vantaggio che l'uomo ricava dalla sua fatica. Eppure si tratta di un testo fondamentale per la comprensione dell'antropologia qoheletiana, in quanto, essendo collocato all'inizio del libro, ben giustifica la scelta metodologica di chi privilegia il discorso sull'uomo rispetto ad ogni altro tema presente nel Qohelet. Proprio la risposta negativa al quesito sul vantaggio che si consegue da un'attività spesso stressante e priva di senso conduce Qohelet a dare il massimo risalto a quei doni che Dio, nella sua benevolenza, concede all'uomo. Sarebbe stato dunque opportuno tener conto anche di quei testi che trattano del lavoro umano, considerato nella sua dimensione meno gratificante con tutto il suo carico di stress e di frustrazione (2,18-23; 4,4-12).

All'inizio del suo studio Anaya Luengo si pronuncia subito a favore di un'interpretazione "positiva" del Qohelet (12), ma tale interpretazione, come è noto, è tutt'altro che condivisa. Essa può senza dubbio costituire un'ipotesi di lavoro da verificare nel corso della ricerca, ma difficilmente può essere assunta come un presupposto iniziale. L'inclusione del libro nel canone non è un motivo sufficiente per porre in secondo piano l'effetto dirompente della riflessione critica di Qohelet, che è comunque articolata intorno al tema dell'*hebel*; infatti anche su ciò che Dio dona all'uomo Qohelet formula il giudizio di vanità (2,26; 6,2). L'esperienza

positiva dei doni divini è ugualmente esposta al rischio della precarietà e, al pari della sapienza e della scienza, non può costituire un valore assoluto.

Tra i testi analizzati rientra Qo 8,10-15, che, come lo studioso stesso riconosce, rappresenta una pericope difficile per chiunque tenti di porre in secondo piano le contraddizioni del Qohelet. Essa si conclude con un elogio della vita, formulato con una terminologia che ricorda molto da vicino un altro testo (4,2), in cui all'opposto Qohelet proclama più felici i morti piuttosto che i viventi (208, n. 562). Questo richiamo meritava di essere approfondito, come pure la relazione con il tema del timor di Dio che è invece appena sfiorato: "La alegría alabada en 8,15 no se opone al temor de Dios predicado en 8,12b-13. Antes bien, como en el resto del libro (cf. 3,12-14), el auténtico temor de Dios conduce fundamentalmente a disfrutar los dones de Dios en el presente, en lugar de esperar ser recompensados en el futuro por Dios en virtud de una supuesta justicia o piedad" (209). Precedentemente, a proposito di Qo 3,14, l'esegeta dichiara che il timor di Dio include "por un lado, temor ante el poder y la superioridad divinas (*tremendum*) y, por otro, reconocimiento reverencial de la perfección de su obrar (*fascinum*) con la aceptación de sus dones y la renuncia a especulaciones sapienciales" (163). Ma questa concezione del timor di Dio, che non ha corrispondenza alcuna nella letteratura sapienziale, non può essere considerata, a mio avviso, soltanto sotto l'aspetto epistemologico come accettazione dei limiti della sapienza umana. Essa ha senza dubbio un riflesso importante sull'esperienza concreta della vita, perché l'impossibilità di cogliere il senso ultimo dell'opera divina tiene l'uomo sospeso sull'abisso del nulla, costringendolo ad aggrapparsi a quell'unico momento presente in cui può entrare in comunione con Dio attraverso i suoi doni.

Ci chiediamo allora se le gioie della vita quotidiana che Dio concede all'uomo secondo il suo misterioso disegno costituiscano un'adeguata compensazione all'esperienza della vanità di tutto ciò che accade sotto il sole. È un interrogativo che la critica pone costantemente agli esegeti che si sforzano di recuperare il sano ottimismo del Qohelet e che spesso non ottiene risposta.

Resta inoltre ancora da spiegare la peculiarità di Qohelet. La risposta andrebbe ricercata nel contesto storico, nel confronto sia con la letteratura sapienziale giudaica sia con la cultura ellenistica, in cui è comunque presente la tematica dei doni divini. Ma anche questo studio, come i tanti che l'hanno preceduto, si limita all'esegesi del testo senza approfondire il contesto storico in cui presumibilmente si colloca l'opera del Qohelet. Come si spiega infatti l'attenzione che l'autore biblico riserva al momento presente, a quell'oggi in cui l'uomo è tenuto ad accogliere i doni divini? Sono ancora pochi gli studiosi che tengono conto dell'importanza che

andava assumendo in epoca ellenistica il nascente pensiero apocalittico con la sua predicazione sull'imminente avvento di un'epoca nuova, ricca di attese e promesse su quell'avvenire che Qohelet pone appunto in discussione (Qo 3,22; 6,12). Un'analisi più approfondita del giudaismo ellenistico potrebbe rendere ragione di alcune tematiche su cui si registra un'enfasi particolare da parte del Qohelet. Ma, come è noto, l'inafferrabilità del suo messaggio fa sì che gli interpreti di tutti i tempi vadano incontro al comune destino di non poter mai approdare a conclusioni definitive. Nello stesso tempo il nostro enigmatico testo lascia sempre aperta la possibilità di avanzare nella ricerca, stimolando nei suoi lettori l'interrogativo sul senso di ciò che accade sotto il sole.

Al di là dei limiti che sono connaturali ad ogni lavoro sul Qohelet, lo studio di Anaya Luengo apporta un contributo decisivo alla ricerca focalizzando uno dei temi fondamentali del libro. L'autore conduce un'analisi accurata dei testi, corredata da un ampio apparato critico che informa il lettore sugli studi più recenti spaziando in tutti gli ambiti della letteratura sul Qohelet.

Utilissimi sono gli schemi che presentano la struttura di ciascuna pericope, in quanto consentono al lettore di avere una visione prospettica dei testi, di cui è opportunamente approfondito l'aspetto filologico e semantico. Su questa base viene giustificata la scelta del tema, che costituisce effettivamente uno dei motivi ricorrenti nell'opera del Qohelet.

Dall'analisi dei testi proposti emergono i caratteri distintivi della tematica dei doni divini anche rispetto agli altri libri della letteratura sapienziale ed è posta ben in risalto la sua peculiarità, che consiste nell'evidenziare il criterio seguito da Dio nel distribuire i suoi doni agli uomini. Mentre Proverbi, Siracide e Sapienza spiegano i criteri dell'agire divino mediante la logica della retribuzione, Qohelet, come Giobbe, preferisce sottolineare il carattere misterioso e trascendente del disegno divino partendo dall'osservazione della realtà e dei limiti della condizione umana (257). Il criterio ultimo dell'agire divino non risiede nei meriti dell'individuo ma nell'inaccessibile volontà di Dio. Non si tratta, però, di una volontà arbitraria e assurda: "La arbitrariedad del reparto no descansa tanto en el capricho divino, cuanto en la inaccesibilidad del misterio para el hombre. A falta de una sabiduría que supere las limitaciones propias de la naturaleza, la actitud 'sabia' consiste en vivir el presente abierto confiadamente a la voluntad de Dios, habitualmente favorable al hombre. Sólo de ese modo el hombre será capaz de encontrar la porción de felicidad que está a su alcance y, con ella, el sentido que ilumine las tinieblas de la existencia" (266). Riconducendo l'arbitrarietà dei doni divini all'inaccessibilità del mistero da parte dell'uomo, Anaya Luengo chiarisce uno degli aspetti più problematici della teologia qoheletiana: l'inquietante immagine di Dio che sembra emergere da alcuni testi del

Qohelet in cui si pone in evidenza l'incomprensibilità dell'agire divino nella ripartizione dei doni (cf. ad es. 6,2). Ciò accade perché la logica di Dio è inaccessibile alla mente umana. Ritengo che si possa condividere pienamente questa interpretazione perché assolutizzando in modo unilaterale i testi che pongono in luce l'arbitrio divino, si rischierebbe di fare del Dio di Qohelet una divinità pagana che gioca a suo piacimento con la vita dell'uomo. In realtà nel Qohelet, come in Giobbe, gli aspetti della vita che sembrano più assurdi e contraddittori sono tali per l'incapacità dell'uomo di penetrare a fondo nell'essenza stessa del reale, e rappresentano la proiezione dei suoi bisogni e delle sue pretese. Quando l'uomo si pone invece nell'ottica della fede, abbandonandosi alla volontà di Dio, riesce a cogliere quella porzione di felicità che comunque gli è concessa per beneficio divino. Dallo studio di Anaya Luengo emerge come il libro del Qohelet ci presenti un'analisi lucida e realistica della condizione umana, che fonda l'urgenza di una scelta di fede. L'uomo, in quanto destinatario dei doni divini, è chiamato a vivere nell'abbandono fiducioso a Dio, che illumina le tenebre della sua esistenza. Sul filo di un'intelligente analisi filologica balza in primo piano la relazione dialettica tra l'uomo e Dio che, pur restando avvolta nel mistero, offre la possibilità di accogliere nella sua dimensione più positiva i doni divini. L'approfondimento del discorso antropologico, oggetto di questo studio, rappresenta anche per il futuro una pista davvero feconda per l'esegesi del Qohelet.

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Novum Testamentum

Michael ZUGMANN, *“Hellenisten” in der Apostelgeschichte*. Historische und exegetische Untersuchungen zu Apg 6,1; 9,29; 11,20 (WUNT 264). Tübingen, Mohr Siebeck, 2009. xii-497 p. 15,5 × 23

This monograph (henceforth “H”) represents a re-working of a Doctoral Dissertation which was completed in 2008 and subsequently accepted by the Katholisch- Theologischen Privatsuniversität Linz (KTU). The first five chapters are called “sprachgeschichtliche und historische”; the sixth and final chapter is described as “bibeltheologisch-exegetische”.

Chapter 1. The author (Z) distinguishes the use of “H” in its three locations in Acts thus: 6,9 speaks of Greek-speaking Jewish Christians; 9,29 speaks of Greek-speaking Jews; 11,20 speaks of Greek-speaking “Nichtjuden (heidnischer Einwohner von Antiochia)” in Antioch, to whom was addressed the missionary preaching (5). The original reading Acts 11,20 is Ἑλληνιστάς (6). On pages 6-7, Z. clearly describes the development of his book. Chapter 2 studies the word ἑλληνίζειν κτλ and shows this verb to mean “Griechsprechender” and so to indicate Greek-speaking “Nichtgriechen”. Chapter 3 argues, particularly from Hellenistic examples, that “Nichtgriechen” (occasionally called Ἑλληνιστάς), were formed in “griechische Sprache, Bildung und Kultur”, and that this phenomenon was far-flung in the ancient world. Chapter 4 then shows that this cultural phenomenon extended over Rome, Syria and Egypt, with the result that at 11,20 the Ἑλληνιστάς are to be understood to be “heidnische syrische”. Chapter 5, with a view to 6,1 and 9,29, studies the meeting the Jewish confrontation of Judaism with Hellenism, especially given the widespread use of the Greek language in the Diaspora and in Palestine. In Chapter 6, after describing the Theological ideas of Diaspora Jews, Z. offers a presentation of the theological profile of the Jewish Christians Ἑλληνιστάς of 6,1-6, using particularly Acts 6,8-14. Specifically, Z. argues that, especially with the help of the accusations against Stephen (vv. 6, 11 and 13f.), that the center of the preaching of Jerusalem Christian Jews to Jewish Christian “‘Hellenisten’ was ein implizit temple-kritisches christologisch-soteriologisches Bekenntnis” (9-10). This belief, found also in Romans 3,25-26a, is then preached, after the expulsion of Jewish Christians from Jerusalem, to “heidnische” Ἑλληνιστάς in Antioch (9,20) where through baptism — and not through allegiance to the demands of ritual law, particularly that of circumcision — these latter people entered into the new People of God.

Having given sufficient reasons in Chapter 1 for his differences of meaning of Ἑλληνιστάς in Acts 6, 9 and 11, Z. offers a Chapter 2 which studies the “Wortfamilie” of Ἑλληνιστάς. This study is necessary since there is no example of the word Ἑλληνιστής in the Greek world before its appearance in the New Testament. Z. notes the 27 examples of the family of Ἑλληνιστής in the literature of Hellenism before the NT and argues that their common characteristic is the use of spoken Greek, while at the same time arguing that many of these examples denote Greek speakers who are not native Greeks. Finally, Z. notes that these examples make quite plausible the claim that the already existing term Ἑλληνιστής (and its basic meaning) was taken over by the Christian community and the author of Acts, and not created by either of them.

Chapter 3 is a somewhat brief discussion, with citations from a number of modern authors, of the effects of “Hellenisierung”, with the result that Z. has established a world in which Hellenism, carried notably throughout the world by political expansion, became an existing and desirable way of life, a culture, which affected citizens of every country that came in contact with Hellenism; indeed, non-Greeks often entered into “Selbsthellenisierung”. The first requisite to being called ἑλληνικός was formation in the Greek “Bildung” or paideia. Then, one becomes further Hellenized in the practice of such things as “Humanität, Menschfreundlichkeit, Wohlwollen und Taktgefühl” (40).

With Chapter 4 Z. studies Greek-speaking non-Greeks in relation to Hellenization, particularly in Syria and Antioch. Though the Seleucid rule did not impose a particular culture on its many, varied subjects, inevitably and for the usual reasons, especially moving from north-Syria, some peoples began to be Hellenized. However, the native Syrians often opposed the inculturalization from Greece and Macedonia, and showed their determination by speaking their own Syrian language, above all Aramaic. Thus, as personal names reveal and political diplomacy show, Aramaic and other semitic languages prospered in opposition to Hellenization (60). Z. speaks of a cultural ‘coexistence’; having a Semitic and a Greek name is a sign of this coexistence. Having described a certain absorption of the Greek culture by many and the stern opposition to Hellenization by others, Z. concentrates on Antioch of Syria, described by Josephus as the third greatest city, behind Rome and Alexandria. Antioch was founded with people from Greece and Macedonia c. 300 BC. Just over a hundred years later, few Greeks immigrated to Antioch; the city became a ‘melting pot’ of many Syrians. But the foundational (Greek) heart of Antioch remained; the ever-growing numbers of Syrians were considered ‘resident aliens’. Z. cites a number of Syrian and non-Syrian authors as witnesses of a varied estimate (Hellenized or no) of Antiocheans — these witnesses were both from outside and within

Antioch. Z. concludes this discussion with the affirmation that many of the inhabitants of this developed city were “tiefgreifend hellenisiert” (72). Z. now follows his study of Antioch with a study of Egypt and its hellenization.

In Chapter 5 (89-294), Z. turns his attention to the question of the influence of Hellenism upon Judaism. He is in agreement with M. Hengel, “dass das Judentum weithin hellenistisch beeinflusst war” (91). Granted that Judaism had in principle fundamental differences with Hellenism, Z. insists that there grew up a hybrid culture in Judaism — “nomenclature, speech, and architecture was generally Greek, while religious customs, art, opinion and Weltanschauung remained oriental in origin”. Of course, though the influences of Hellenism affected both groups, one must be careful to distinguish various degrees and manners in any Hellenization-process in Diaspora Judaism and Palestinian Judaism.

Z.’s next step is to run through periods ranging from “die vorhellenistische Zeit” to the hegemony of Hillel and many other Rabbis, thereby showing the indeed varied interpenetrations of Hellenism and Judaism; particularly the periods of the Diodochens, the Hasmoneans, the Romans and Herodians are discussed (95-117). Z. then asks what is the Old Testament view of the non-Jews; he concludes that (1) an “unproblematisch-universalistisch” relationship is established in Gen 10,2-5, a positive basis for a relationship with Jawan; (2) an “eschatologisch-universalistisch” perspective in Isa 66,19 in which the nations share; (3) negative criticisms against actions of Jawan described in Ezechiel, Joel, Zechariah and Daniel. Jawan played no particular roll in OT theology (126).

Next, Z. asserts (126-205) a central thesis which will have many examples to justify it: “Thus we can conclude: in the wide and broad Diaspora, ‘Hellenisten’ refers not to Apostates, Assimilated or a clearly defined religious group, but to Greek-speaking Jews who were united in their Greek language, their Greek Bible and their Greek Synagogue services”. This argument is lengthy, meant to bring to the reader’s attention an exhaustive list of references from the Diaspora that testifies to the Jews as Greek-speaking. To this is added a further, lengthy discussion of sources which describe the Greek-speaking Jews of Palestine. This careful examination of materials shows the factors which unified the Jews of the Diaspora with those of Palestine, so that, while one finds those ‘returning to the Promised Land’ with their own customs, etc., one also finds a harmony in central matters of Jewish religion, even when there are groups of returnees (“Rückwanderer”) desiring to live according to the ways they have developed outside Palestine (205-294). At the end of this section, Z. underlines the main motives which often motivated Diaspora Jews to return to Palestine. These motives show, in

those who had absorbed other cultures to varying degrees, a unity with those who lived in Palestine.

Z. offers a final Chapter 6 concerned with Acts 6,1 and 9,29. With these verses in mind, Z. offers a “theological profile” of three groups: the Jewish Ἑλληνισταί the Jewish Christian and the Ἑλληνισταί “der Stephanusgruppe”. One of Z.’s first assertions is the returnees to the Promised Land and to Jerusalem were not, as the Tübingen school (Baur is named) maintained, a “liberale Einstellung gegenüber Gesetz und Tempel” (299), but just the opposite: these people were devoted to these central elements of Judaism.

While Z. has admirably described the Hellenization of Jews, he now (Chap. 6) attempts to describe Hellenized Jews who are Christian; for this, Z. begins from Acts 6,8-14, though he does suggest a primacy for Stephen based on Acts 1-7. Z. now enters into the world of exegesis. First, he offers a combined affirmation of valid, if still obscure sources for Acts 6 and 7, and, at the same time, a revisory labor of Luke in dealing with these sources. Then, Z. begins his interpretation of Hellenist by a call upon Mark 14,57-58: “I will destroy this temple made by human hands and in three days build another not made by human hands” – which indicates that Luke (Acts) cannot be explained by the same Luke (Gospel/Acts). Rather, for Z., Luke takes the Marcan words out of the trial of Jesus to fit them into a later presentation, which we find in the accusation against Stephen. Specifically, Z. reserves for Acts the terms χειροποίητον ἀχειροποίητον, and asserts that Luke dropped the second half of Jesus’ words, cited in Mark, in favor of the words we find used against Stephen, “... and will change the customs which were handed down to us by Moses” (Acts 6,14).

The conclusion of this argument is that Jewish Hellenist Christians thought that the risen Jesus himself was the temple not made by human hands, a concept which was applied also to the Christian body of believers. Stephen, in other words, had no quarrel with the validity of the Jerusalem Temple; he, and his, were simply convinced that this Temple was transitory, to be replaced by the risen Jesus and his community forever.

If there be any criticism of Z.’s work, there are two. One, his lack of thorough exegesis of Stephen’s speech leaves one with questions which need answer before acceptance of Z.’s profile of Ἑλληνισταί and two, though filled with many, many cited authors, the work lacks a reasonable presentation of studies done in other than the German language.

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Varia

Vincent Pierre-Michel LAISNEY, *L'Enseignement d'Aménémopé* (Studia pohl: Series Maior19). Roma, Editrice Pontificio Istituto Biblico, 2007. xii-405 p. 17 × 25. €45

The Instruction of Amenemope, the Egyptian wisdom text that changed the course of the study of biblical wisdom literature, was first published by E.A.W. Budge in 1923. In 1925 appeared H.O. Lange's transliteration and German translation, with a philological and grammatical analysis of the main manuscript, BM 10474. Among more recent translations are I. GRUMACH's *Untersuchungen zur Lebenslehre des Amenope* (Berlin 1972), M. LICHTHEIM's in her monumental book: *Ancient Egyptian Literature* (Berkeley 1976) vol. 2, published also in *The Context of Scripture* (eds. W.W. HALLO – K.L. YOUNGER) (Leiden 1997) vol. 1; H. Brunner's in *Altägyptische Weisheit* (Zürich 1988) and P. VERNUS' in *Sagesses de l'Égypte Pharaonique* (Paris 2001).

More than 80 years have passed, then, since Lange first transliterated the single complete manuscript of the Instruction (BM 10474). Excerpts published later and new research on the grammar, lexicon and semantics of the New Egyptian language, declares Laisney (1-2) led to the need for his new translation.

Chapter 1 lists the special characteristics of the author's study: 1. Each chapter of the Instruction is divided not according to content but following such criteria as changing grammatical subject, verb tenses or *parallelismus membrorum*; 2. tracing recurring subjects through repeated key words; 3. indicating biblical parallels.

Chapter 2 presents eight manuscripts of the Instruction: two papyri, four tablets, an ostrakon and a graffito, the oldest of these the Stockholm Papyrus and the Cairo Ostrakon from the 20th and 21st Dynasties, and the most complete, Papyrus BM 10474 from the mid 7th Century B.C.E. Laisney uses language to date the Instruction to the late 20th and early 21st Dynasties, pointing out its characteristic but not unique structure, stichography (verses written in a single line) and the division into 30 numbered chapters, each on a different subject, with some subjects recurring and thus serving an integrative purpose (9). He regards this work as carefully planned and structured, in this respect recalling the biblical prophetic and wisdom literature.

Chapter 3 summarizes the stylistic features, centric structure, repetition, refrains and parallelism, concluding with comments mainly on grammar and less on orthography.

Chapter 4 interprets the text, addressing in each chapter of the Instruction transliteration of the hieroglyphics, translation, the subject, chapter structure including number of verses, problems of transliteration from the Hieratic and philological and material-ideological analysis of its different sections.

Chapter 5 is devoted to general comments on the content of this Instruction, intended to help middle level clerks perform their duties. It warns mainly against immoral and dishonest conduct and promises success to those who heed this caution, on such mundane subjects as surveying for taxation purposes, writing records, table manners and crossing the Nile on a ferry. Here and there, however, there are philosophical questions like man's likelihood of knowing the future, and his dependence on the god. The *Sitz im Leben* of the Instruction was the school for scribes, as indicated by those later manuscripts that are students' copies (Turin, Paris and Moscow tablets). Throughout his study Laisney makes comparisons with other Egyptian instructions, here summing up the differences and similarities between this Instruction and the others. Interestingly, in Amenemope references to women, marriage and educating children, burial preparations and cultic obligations are absent. By contrasts elements rare in earlier Instructions, like justice and integrity, the relation between man and his god and personal piety are, stressed.

Chapter 6 deals with the relationship between Amenemope and Proverbs 22, 17-23, 11, which attracted scholarly attention beginning with the Egyptologist A. Erman in 1924, who first pointed out the link between the two. Laisney again notes this extraordinary closeness, reaching the accepted conclusion that Proverbs derives from the earlier Egyptian text and not vice versa, though it adapted the Egyptian material, not copying it verbatim. He makes the important point that a translated text could not possibly have been transformed into an Egyptian literary classic taught in schools. He sees no direct connection between the Instruction and Proverbs, but rather mediation involving an older Hebrew text, apparently from the Saitic era of close contact between Israel and Egypt. Hence the collection "words of the wise men" that includes chapters 22-23 was introduced at a later stage, after the Saitic period and before the Persian or Hellenistic era in which one assumes the canonic Proverbs was finally edited.

Chapter 7 relates to the 20th Century tendency to see the Instruction of Amenemope as the work of a monotheistic writer, relying mainly on use of the singular form of 'god'. Laisney states unequivocally that the work reflects a polytheistic worldview, after tracing the use of the term 'god' and of names of specific gods.

Chapter 8 deals with metrics following Fecht's rules. Laisney's analysis shows domination of the two-beat (distich) in two-thirds of the

work, and the three-beat form in the rest. Generally speaking, the Instruction is composed of distiches with a meter of 2+2 or 2+3, but tristiches and quatrains are also discernible.

Chapter 9 contains a complete, continuous translation, followed by a comprehensive bibliography and two appendices relating to the term *ntr* and the possessive adjective and pronoun.

Concluding the book is a complete presentation of the Instruction in hieroglyphics, reconstructed in the light of all the manuscript copies. There are also indexes of Egyptian and non-Egyptian words, of quotations from Egyptian and biblical sources, and finally a general index of subjects and terms.

Laisney's principal contribution lies in the reconstruction of the Instruction of Amenemope in the light of all available manuscripts, and providing new readings of references hitherto obscure e.g. ch. 9, lines 12, 6-8,17; ch. 14, lines 17, 2-3; and ch. 29, lines 26, 20-27,1.

The Instruction is a link in the chain of Egyptian wisdom literature originating in the Third Millennium B.C.E. and so clearly rooted in earlier Instructions like those of Ptahhotep and Ani. Laisney does well, then, to reinforce his interpretations by citing parallels from Egyptian texts in general and from the didactic literature in particular (e.g. 87, 100, 181, 183, 230 and in concentrated form in ch. 5). He presents different possible explanations, stating reasons for adopting one of them, as in discussions of lines 4, 12-13 (64) and 12, 1-2 (125, 131). No less important, he relates to the rich array of stylistic elements, among them imagery and metaphor, parallelisms, word play and refrains. All these and his in-depth analysis of the metric scheme elucidate the work's structure, helping to reveal the artistic and literary heights that Egyptian wisdom literature attained early in the 1st Millennium B.C.E.

Laisney thus provides a highly significant tier in the formal-stylistic research on Egyptian wisdom literature and its metrics. Here, however, a brief summary of Fecht's rules that he follows would have been appropriate and an acknowledgement at least of other methods of metric analysis: I. SHIRUN-GRUMACH, "Bemergungen zu Rytms, Form und Inhalt in der Weisheit", *Studien zu altägyptischen Lebenslehren* (eds. E. HORNUNG – O. KEEL) (OBO 28; Friburg – Göttingen 1979) 317-352. Cf. R.B. PARKINSON, *Poetry and Culture in Middle Kingdom Egypt, a Dark Side of Perfection* (London – New York 2002) 112-117.

Unlike biblical comparisons in previous research that usually focus on Proverbs 22-23, Laisney's bring parallels from throughout the Bible (Index, 396-397). Most significantly, this reinforces the recognized view that biblical literature is an integral part of Ancient Near Eastern literature.

By contrast, the material-ideological facet of his study tends to be superficial: Laisney divides the Instruction's content (8-9) into three

parts: the hot-tempered man (chs. 2-10), dishonesty (chs. 11-20) and the weak (chs. 21-29). This is overgeneralized (chs. 6-8 are not about the hot-tempered man. The main theme of chs. 11 and 18 is not dishonesty and chs. 21-24 and 26-27 are not about the weak.). The author seems overeager to prove that the work is meticulously planned.

Occasionally he enlarges upon theological matters, as in discussions of the hot-tempered man in the temple (77-78), attitude to the wicked (66) and perception of the future (85-86). However there is no in-depth discussion of the relationship between man and god, the god's nature and his role in creation, nor of the important transition from classic perceptions of compensation – act and consequence – in earlier Instructions to recognition of man's complete dependence on the god whose will is omnipotent (cf. chs. 21, 22, 25).

Among the differences that would have been worthy of discussion are lexical-semantic changes in concepts and key words such as abomination to God (*bw.t ntr*) (chs. 10, 13, 17, 29) that replaces abomination to Ka (Ptahhotep, maxims 7, 8, 11) dealing with social transgressions (cf. abomination to the Lord in Prov 3,32; 6,16; 11,1.20; 12,22; 20,23 etc.) and the antonymic pairs silent-hot-tempered in Amenemope that replaces the wise-foolish of earlier Instructions.

The antonym pair in Amenemope offers a missed opportunity to compare the perception of these human types with that in earlier wisdom literature (Kagemi, Ptahhotep). In this context Laisney's view that the hot-tempered man in Egyptian represents the loquacious one, which in Proverbs, adapting the Egyptian, became the angry one (134), is inaccurate. The Egyptian hot-tempered man has related negative qualities like angry outbursts and quarrel. Cf. Ptahhotep 375-378; Amenemope chs. 3 and 9; N. SHUPAK, *Positive and Negative Human Types in the Egyptian Wisdom Literature, Homeland and Exile*. Biblical and Ancient Near Eastern Studies in Honour of Oded Bustenay (eds. G. GALIL – M. GELLER – A. MILLARD) (SVT 180; Leiden – Boston 2009) 145-159.

Moreover it is hard to accept that In Amenemope religion and the cult of the gods hold central place (237) since the work contains no ritual commandments other than the prohibition against withholding sacrifices related to the scribe's professional obligations (ch. 5).

The general comparison with Proverbs 22-23 cites the familiar, it does not innovate. Lately Fox, like Laisney, suggested possible indirect contact but through an Aramaic, not a Hebrew text, deriving from the Saitic times – M.V. FOX, *The Formation of Proverbs 22:17-23*, *WdO* 38 (2008) 22-37. I doubt the existence of an intermediary, Hebrew or Aramaic, for the points of contact are continuous, and such clearly Egyptian concepts and imagery are found nowhere else in Proverbs

N. SHUPAK, "Instruction of Amenemope and Proverbs 22:17-24 from the Perspective of Contemporary Research", *Seeking out the Wisdom of the Ancients*. Essays Offered to Honor Michael V. Fox (eds. R.L. TROXEL et al.) (Winona Lake, IN 2005) 203-220.

Discussion as to monotheistic or polytheistic authorship is limited to names and terms designating god or gods, and avoids confronting relevant issues like the moral perceptions reflected in the god-man and man-man relationships — cf. W.O.E. OESTERLEY, "The Teaching of Amen-em-ope' and the Old Testament", *ZAW* 45 (1927) 9-24; R.O. KEVIN, "The Wisdom of Amen-em-Apt and its Possible Dependence upon the Hebrew Book of Proverbs", *JROS* 14 (1930) 115-157.

A few technical points: separating textual and philological notes is a hindrance to readers who also would have been better served by a complete hieroglyphic transliteration right after the translation in Chapter 9, not after bibliography and appendices. Nor is it clear what criteria led the author to quote equally relevant parallels sometimes within the discussion and sometimes in footnotes (compare. e.g. 54 and 87, with 225 note 1279).

The bibliography is comprehensive and up-to-date, although here and there references related to items might have been added, such as J.A. EMERTON, "The Teaching of Amenemope and Proverbs XXII 17-XXIV 22: Further Reflections on a Long-Standing Problem", *VT* 51 (2001) 431-465 or B.U. SCHIPPER, "Israels Weisheit im Context des Alten Orients", *Bibel und Kirche* 4 (2004) 188-194.

That said, the author has undertaken a valuable and complex task in publishing anew the Instruction, in which foreign words and even errors became an integral part. He has added significantly to the body of research on Egyptian wisdom literature, and future publications on that subject will have to take Laisney's study into account.

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